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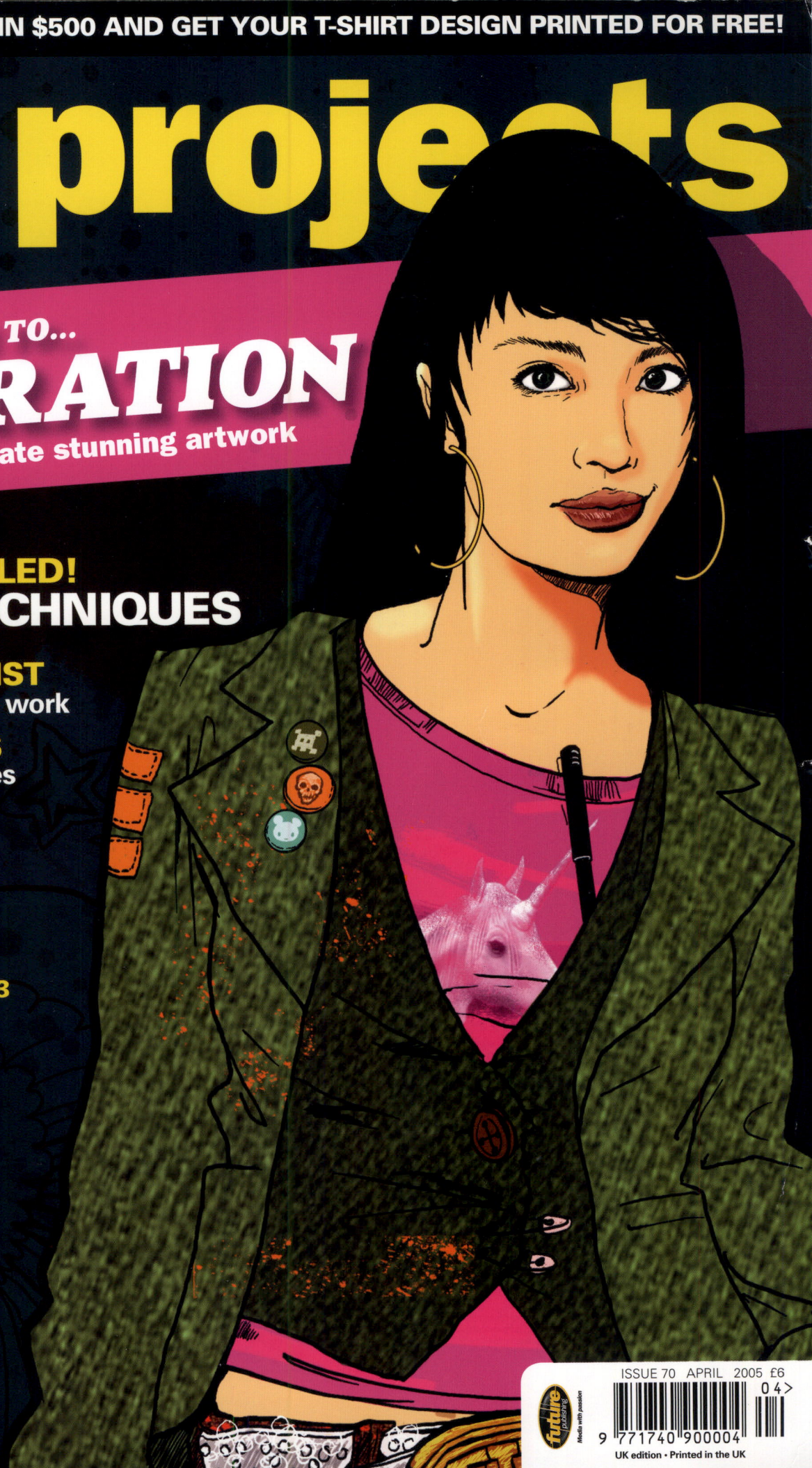

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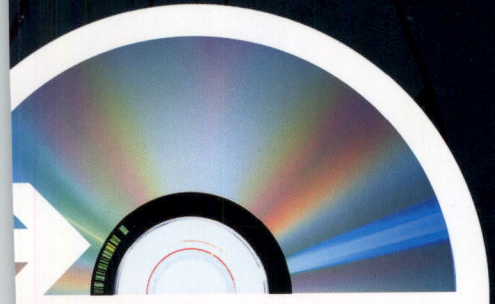

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[t] UK orders and renewals: 0870 837 4722
[t] UK subscription queries: 0870 837 4773
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Printed at: BGP

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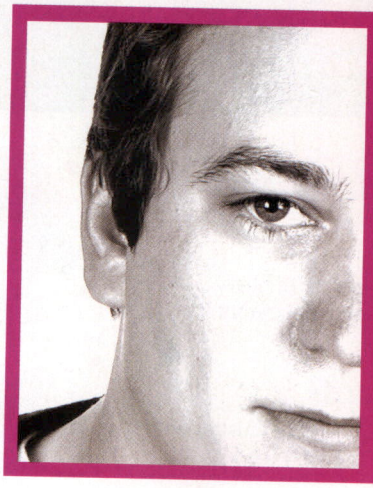
ABC Computer Arts Projects is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations Jan-Dec 2003: **16,173**

Welcome



The world of digital illustration is constantly evolving. The latest trends see a shift from the clean, vector artwork of previous years to a more unique, hand-drawn style. As a digital artist, though, it's your job to try to establish trends rather than follow them. The professional illustrator should be constantly striving for new ways of working and new directions, and after you've been through this issue, we hope you'll come up with new ideas and techniques that will amaze your clients and yourself.

This month, then, we bring you a riot of colour and styles, from the sketchy, hand-drawn contemporary illustrations of Beat13, to the often humorous, yet perfectly crafted characters of TheBrainbox. You'll learn new techniques in *Flash* for creating cool, super-realistic imagery, discover the ins and outs of creating stunning celebrity portraits, discover some hidden tools in your favourite illustration software, and much more. Flip over the page for the full contents, and remember to let me know what you think of the issue...

Rob Carney, Associate Editor
rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk

Contributing creatives

COVER IMAGE

Fat Truckers Union

Scott Gursky is the sole member of Fat Truckers Union and has created this über-cool cover image for us, illustrating the whole lot in *Photoshop*. Keep abreast of Scott's wide-ranging and diverse work at his amazing website below, and check out our exclusive interview with the artist, revealing his ideas and working methods, beginning on page 60.

[w] www.fattruckersunion.com

Stephen Collins

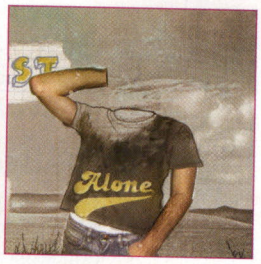
Stephen Collins is a contemporary illustrator working out of Norwich and London. He frequently creates celebrity portraits for *The Times* and, in our tutorial beginning on page 72, he shows you exactly how he does it.

[w] www.stephencollinsillustration.co.uk

Erotic Dragon

Responsible for the stunning artwork illustrating our 'Back to the drawing board?' feature (page 14), Erotic Dragon is top illustrator Miho Sadogawa. Check out her website below for more...

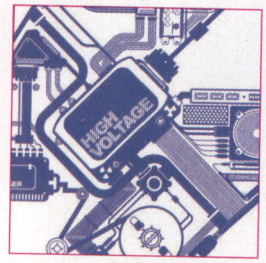
[w] www.eroticdragon.com



Mauro Gatti

An Italian illustrator and designer with an inimitable style, Mauro Gatti shows you how to bring your illustrations to life in our tutorial on page 54. Also, check out our interview with him on page 50.

[w] www.thebrainbox.com



Graphic Airlines

Chan Ta Kat of Graphic Airlines is responsible for some of the coolest T-shirt illustrations around. Learn the secrets of his techniques in our tutorial, starting on page 30.

[w] www.graphicairlines.com

Tell us what topics you'd like to see covered in-depth in *Computer Arts Projects*. Contact us on:
[e] rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk

We're always on the lookout for new artists as well as established creatives – so if you're interested in contributing to the magazine, please send some examples of your work to **[e] johann.chan@futurenet.co.uk**

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CONTENTS

IN-DEPTH GUIDE

TUTORIALS

Electrifying T-shirt designs 30
Photorealism in Flash 44
Bring your illustrations to life 54
Working to a brief 64
Celebrity nip/tuck 72
Designing for kids 88

FEATURES

Showcase 06
Back to the drawing board? 14
40 top tool techniques 20
Threadless.com case study 28
The agent agenda 40
Taking stock 78
Children's book illustration 84

PROFILES

Beat13 36
TheBrainbox 50
Fat Truckers Union 60

SUBSCRIBE

Subscription offer 38
International subscriptions 63

REGULARS

Competition 26
Back issues 71
Next month 95
CD contents 96

FEATURES

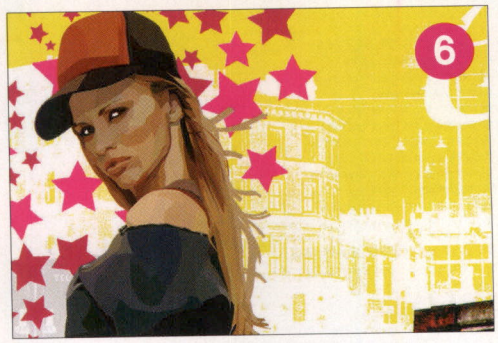
Showcase 06
We take a look at the work of nine influential professional illustrators

Back to the drawing board? 14
Discover the future of digital illustration from the mouths of industry leaders...

40 top tool techniques 20
Pro techniques revealed as we uncover hidden tools in *Illustrator* and *FreeHand*

Threadless.com 28
How two Chicago-based designers are changing what other designers wear...

The agent agenda 40
Triple your client list and get more work? We explore the pros and cons of getting an illustration agent



Taking stock 78
Can you really make a living by selling your work to stock illustration companies? Find out in this in-depth feature

Children's book illustration 84
Find out how you can make it big in the world of children's illustration! Expert advice from the best in the business

PROFILES

Beat 13 36
Meet the Birmingham-based design collective with a fresh perception on the world of illustration

TheBrainbox 50
TheBrainbox is headed up by Italian illustrator Mauro Gatti, a man who wants to express strong concepts and make people laugh

Fat Truckers Union 60
Find out the working methods and ideas of Scott Gursky, the man behind our cover illustration

TUTORIALS

T-shirt design 30
Find out how Chan Ka Tat of Graphic Airlines designed one of his award-winning T-shirts for Threadless.com

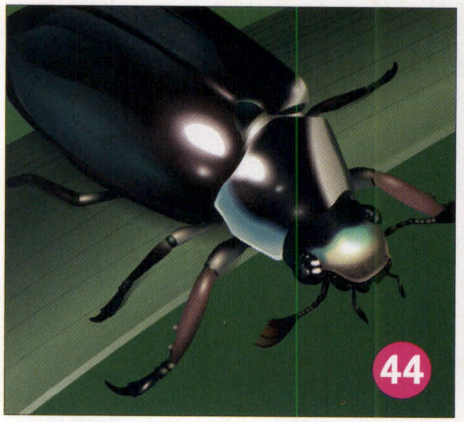
Photorealism in Flash 44
Robert Firebaugh of Electrotank.com fame shows you how to create photorealistic creatures in *Flash* using only fills and radial gradients

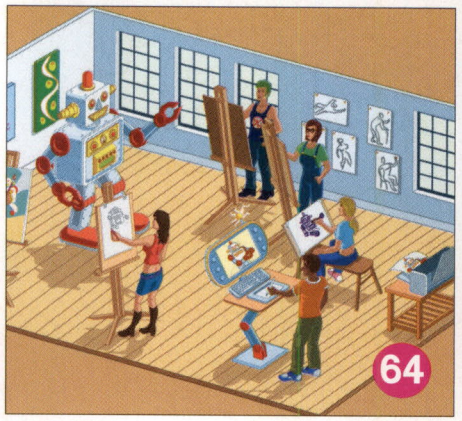
Bring illustrations to life 54
Mauro Gatti of TheBrainbox reveals the techniques behind breaking apart a *Photoshop* illustration and animating it in *After Effects*

Working to a brief 64
UK-based illustrator Rod Hunt runs through the creative process, showing you how to tackle an editorial brief

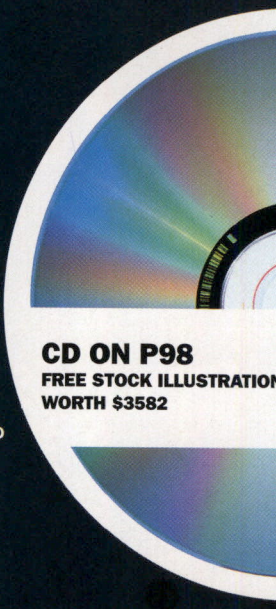
Celebrity nip/tuck 72
Stephen Collins of *The Times* fame reveals his celebrity portrait secrets and shows you how to draw facial features

Designing for kids 88
Ginzberg goes back to his childhood and designs a striking jungle-themed poster using Macromedia *FreeHand*





Design a T-shirt and Win $500!
P26



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14 **Insider's guide to illustration**
Everything you need to know to create stunning artwork!

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Illustration showcase

We bring you work from nine of the best contemporary illustrators out there…

Dwayne Bell

A practising illustrator for four years, Dwayne Bell has racked up prestigious editorial clients such as *GQ* and the *Financial Times*. We asked him what his aims were as an artist. "To make a living would be the obvious, but shallow, answer," he jokes. "To give a client work that answers the brief while allowing me to enjoy the process of its creation," is the more serious answer. He continues: "I want to surprise myself and my clients with unexpected touches, details and happy mistakes. And I never want to get so drawn in by the Mac that I forget the sketchbook is my friend."

Offering his advice for anyone wanting to get into freelance illustration, Dwayne comments: "Be prepared to be skint. For ages. Don't think of it as a 9 to 5 job you leave behind at night and weekends, because it's not." Dwayne is also cautious of the overuse of technology: "Keeping an element of hand-drawn or hand-made is at the heart of any piece I make. Even work which has been created entirely in *Photoshop* has a scrappy, scribbled feel, or so I hope. I now love *Photoshop* but I'm glad I ignored it as long as I did; I was able to use it as a tool to further work I'd already spent developing, giving it personality and individuality."

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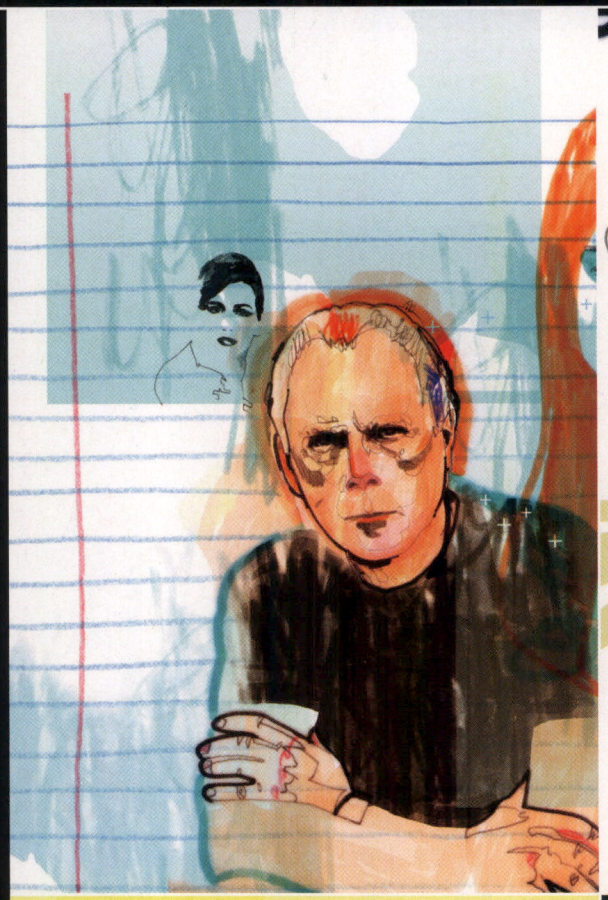
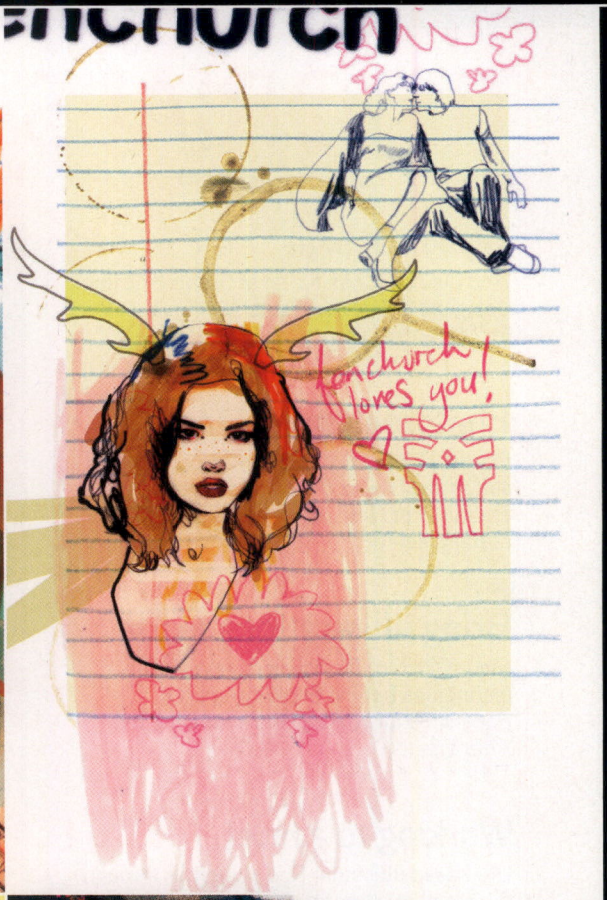
With clients such as *GQ* and the *Financial Times*, Dwayne Bell is a real force in the world of editorial illustration.





Kristian Russell

Part of the seminal London agency Big Active, Kristian Russell is an illustrator and artist whose impressive client list includes the likes of Nike and electronica band Air.

He tells us about his style: "I have a psychedelic style, I like the freedom within those rules and create a hyper-reality where anything, anyone, any colour can be maximised." When discussing his mission statement and aims as an artist, Kristian tells us where he's coming from: "Anywhere between art and illustration and graphics – they're all creative outlets for me. As long as the idea is nailed!" Like many of the illustrators we've spoken to in this showcase, everything is hand-drawn in Kristian's work, before being taken into *Illustrator* for colouring and tweaking.

When quizzed about his advice to those going into the world of commercial illustration, Kristian offers some thoughts that ring true: "Always believe in yourself and your work. It's a cliché I know, but it's imperative to have that self-belief as many will want you to compromise. And be pushy – create your own destiny."

Responsible for some of the coolest campaigns out there, Kristian Russell's unique style has drawn the attention of Nike and the band Air.

[w] www.kristian-russell.com
[w] www.kristianrussellbox.com
UK AGENT: **[w]** www.bigactive.com
US AGENT: **[w]** www.art-dept.com

Martin Gardner

After nine years as a practising artist, Martin Gardner's aim is to "explore the boundaries and hidden connections between aesthetic, experimentation, commercialisation, and rent." Describing his style as "glossy, hyper-real, and hi-res" Martin's clients include Erasure, Imagestate and Ministry of Sound.

His digital toolbox includes many 3D modelling and rendering packages (working on a PC), but Martin has a penchant for the NURBS modeller *Rhino*. Obviously a technical guy, Martin's advice for anyone about to embark on an illustration career is "buy as much RAM as you can afford, and definitely buy two hard drives with one constantly backing up the other." If you've ever lost any work to a big crash, you'll know exactly where Martin's coming from!

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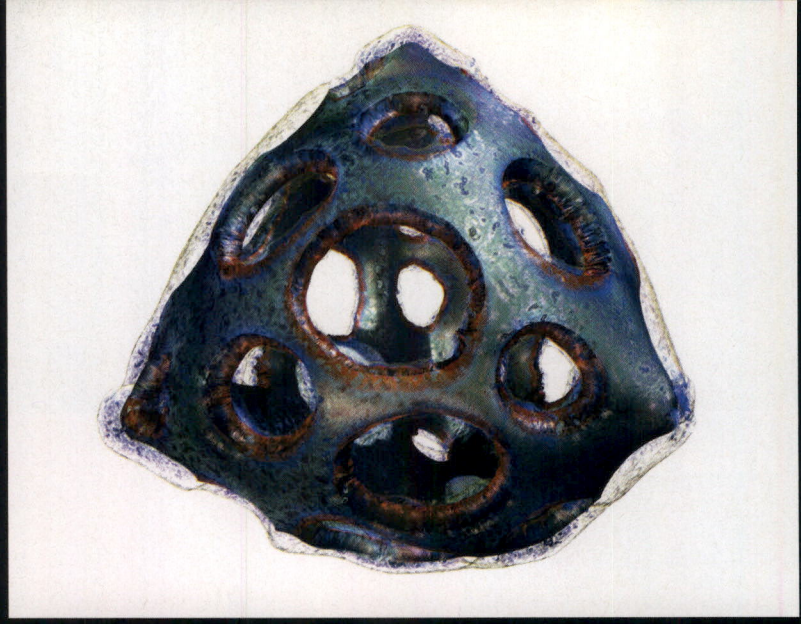
Succeeding in producing a hyper-real, glossy feel to his imagery, Martin has completed jobs for a wide range of clients, including pop band Erasure.



Dan Alexander

"I like to work in a way that's fun, inventive and witty," says freelance illustrator Dan Alexander, whose clients include Levi's, BMW and FHM. "Within all of my projects, there's a heavy emphasis on the accuracy of the individual in a creative environment. To me a successful illustration is one that can provoke interest and convey a message."

Dan goes on to tell us that he aims to expand his client base both in the UK and abroad, working with passionate clients who value creativity. "My ambition this year is to have several big advertising campaigns in my folio, to explore illustrating within the music industry and to develop some of my illustrations into moving image," he says

"I explore any tool at my disposal," continues Dan. "I use a digital camera, half-chewed biro, several dried paint brushes and an overused G5. Once a pen sketch forms the base for my work, I then build several layers up in both *Photoshop* and *Illustrator* to create depth and balance."

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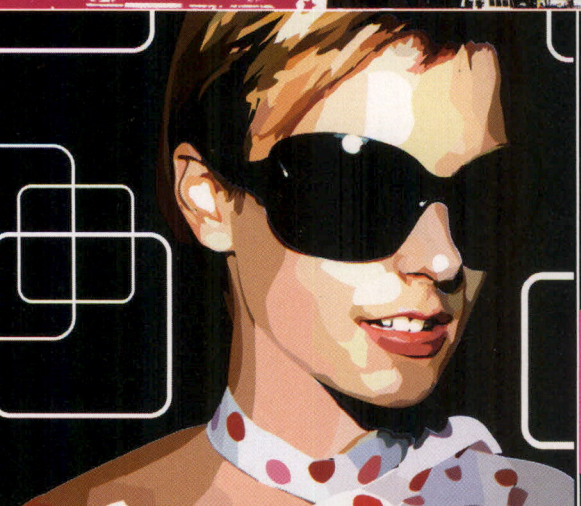
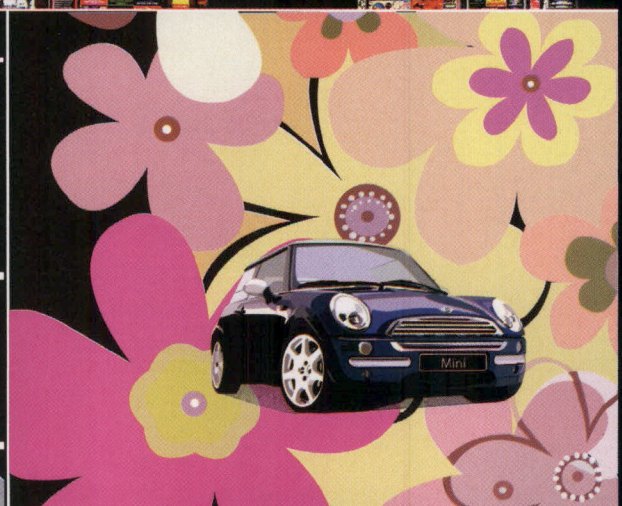
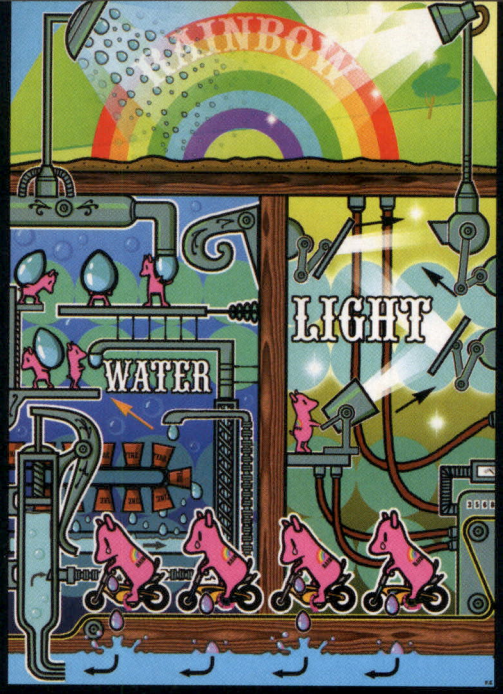




A practising illustrator for three years, Dan's clients to date include Levi's, BMW Mini and FHM.



Frances Castle

Frances Castle is an illustrator whose individual pieces all play a part in an imaginary world. "Each illustration is a small part of the world that I create, and I have worked hard developing my own style." And that style is certainly unique, drawing influences from pop art, cartoons, comic book and game art.

Frances is currently taking on editorial briefs, but sets her heart, rather unsurprisingly, on the realm of children's books. "I would love to get into children's books, figure design and animation. In fact, I'm keen to work in as many different media as possible and have my illustration style take over the world!"

To date, her clients include Disney, Namco and EA, and Frances has also exhibited around the world as part of a collective called the Stuckists. She describes her working methods: "I work mainly in *Photoshop* with a Wacom tablet. I like to draw rather than mess around tweaking vectors."

She continues: "I have a little PDA that runs a program called *Pocket Artist*, I carry this around with me, like a sketchbook. I can save drawings as PSD files... so I can import them straight into *Photoshop* with layers intact."

She concludes with a statement that rings true: "I hope the simplicity of my images is appealing to young and old alike, and that the characters have a personality of their own."

[w] www.smallmoonvalley.com
[e] frances.castle@btinternet.com

Frances Castle has worked with the likes of Disney, EA and Namco, and he stunning, yet simple style is unique an immediately recognisable.

Eelco Van den Berg

At the age of 13, Dutch illustrator Eelco Van den Berg discovered graffiti, and after, in his own words, "not paying much attention at school" he began fashioning an original illustrative style that is still going strong. When questioned on his thoughts about pursuing an illustration career, Eelco offers some choice advice, telling us that you should keep on developing, creating work that keeps you happy and pleases others.

He comments: "For a few months I've said 'no thanks' to some jobs, since I know they will only cause me frustration, endless time and no pleasure at all. Now I just jump out of bed, happy that a new day has born and that I can get busy in the studio, working on nice projects! Some people call me a workaholic, but I just spend a lot of time with my passion."

Although recently making the switch to digital illustration tools, Eelco still uses traditional methods to get everything going: "I spend most time on drawing and finding the right ingredients and idea for the illustration," he comments. "When I'm pleased with it, I draw all elements separately with pigment liners on smooth cardboard. After the drawings have been scanned I use Adobe *Streamline* to convert them to vector points. Then the show can begin!"

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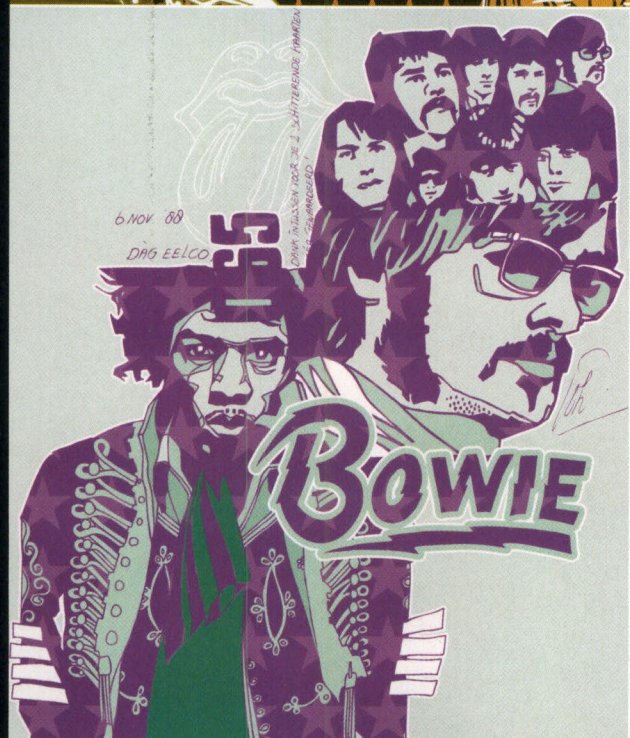
Up until recently, Eelco Van den Berg was painting with acrylic on wood. But over the last year and a half, he tells us: "I've fallen deeply in love with *Illustrator*."



Jo Wong

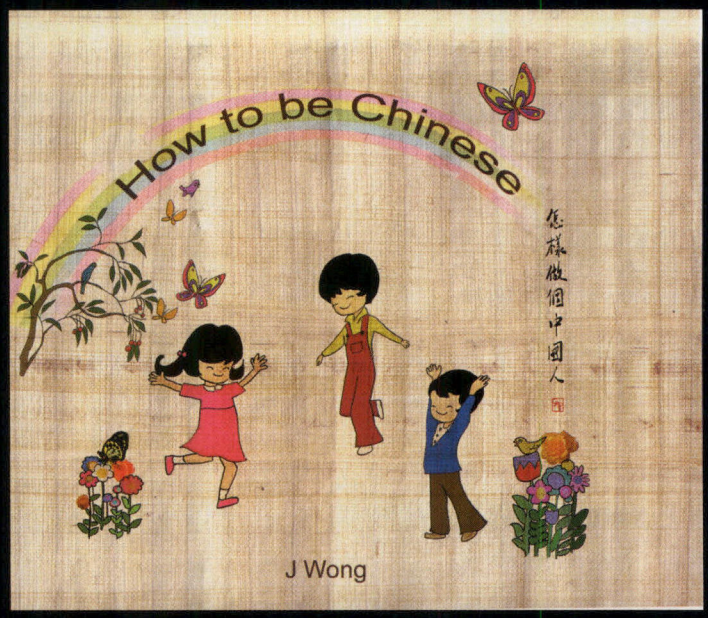
Although relatively new to the illustration scene having graduated in 2004, Jo Wong is a freelance illustrator who's definitely going places. Describing her own style as "fun, colourful and quirky" this is an artist who is inspired by "the idea of what the perfect or ideal world is as they are portrayed in fairytales, old musicals and old 50s–70s 'easy listening' music."

Summing up her illustration methods, Jo tells us, "I use a lot of collage in my work. I collect interesting old vintage stuff at car boots and charity shops."

She continues: "I usually scan bits of fabric or an object, then do some drawing, then maybe take photos and then arrange it all together in *Photoshop*. There's really no logic to the madness."

[e] joannewong82@hotmail.com

Jo Wong has been attracting attention from many big clients and her work features on the pages of *Computer Arts Projects* on a regular basis.



Peter Greenwood

"Illustration to me is such an expressive way of putting across my view of the world," comments Peter Greenwood. "My way of drawing is totally a part of me and my inspiration comes from observing everyday stuff, and mentally locking it away somewhere ready for the day it's needed. I like to keep an eye on all of culture's new ways and this informs my illustrative world."

Until recently, Peter's style has been very graphic and stylised, but a recent change in direction has seen him go back to a more hand-drawn feel.

"I produce pencil roughs in an A4 sketchbook with a very sharp 2H pencil," says Peter. Peter is obviously a man who loves details: "Then I scan them into the Mac, and pull them into *Illustrator CS* using a Wacom tablet." His style somehow captures the feel of a sketchbook, with the crispness of vectors, and is one that has won him an impressive client list.

Peter has some simple advice for anyone entering the industry. "If you can come up with a unique style or way of marketing your work, you can get a foot in the door. Once you have a few commissions under your belt, you can really start to build on it, and people will take you more seriously."

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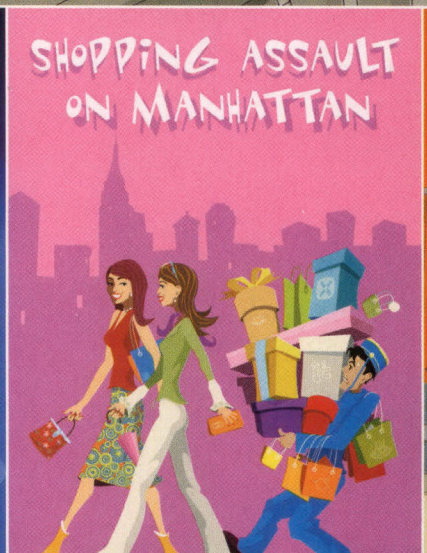
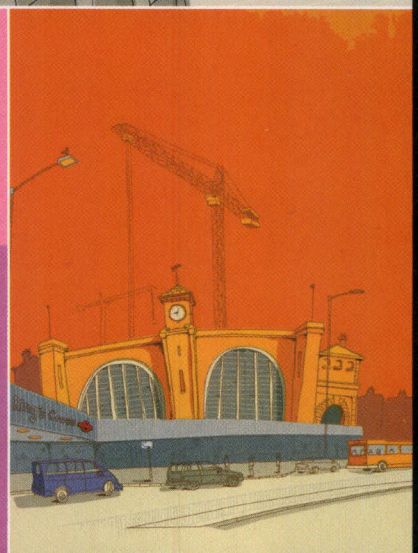
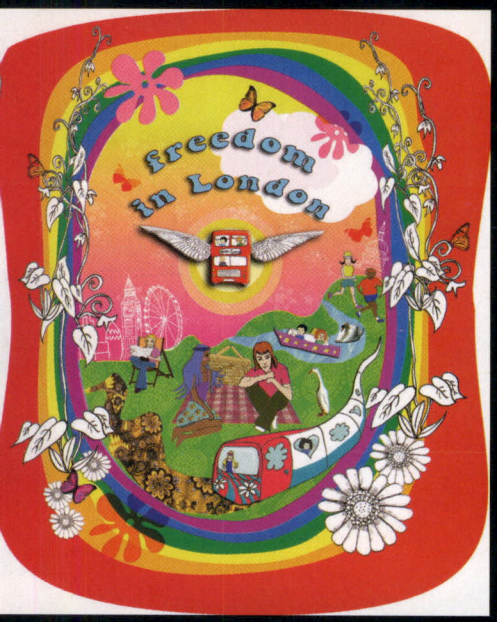




Once an artist with a very crisp, graphic style, Peter Greenwood has recently developed his style to echo the hand-drawn feel of his sketchbook...



Kung Fu
Every Chinese person knows Kung fu. This is a true fact. If they say they don't, they are lying to you
Kung Fu is good, it's a little bit frightening, fought with expert timing.
Where ever you are preferably in a snooker hall, massage parlour or
Chinese restaurant. Just start a fight.
Then everyone will be Kung Fu fighting! Hai ya!

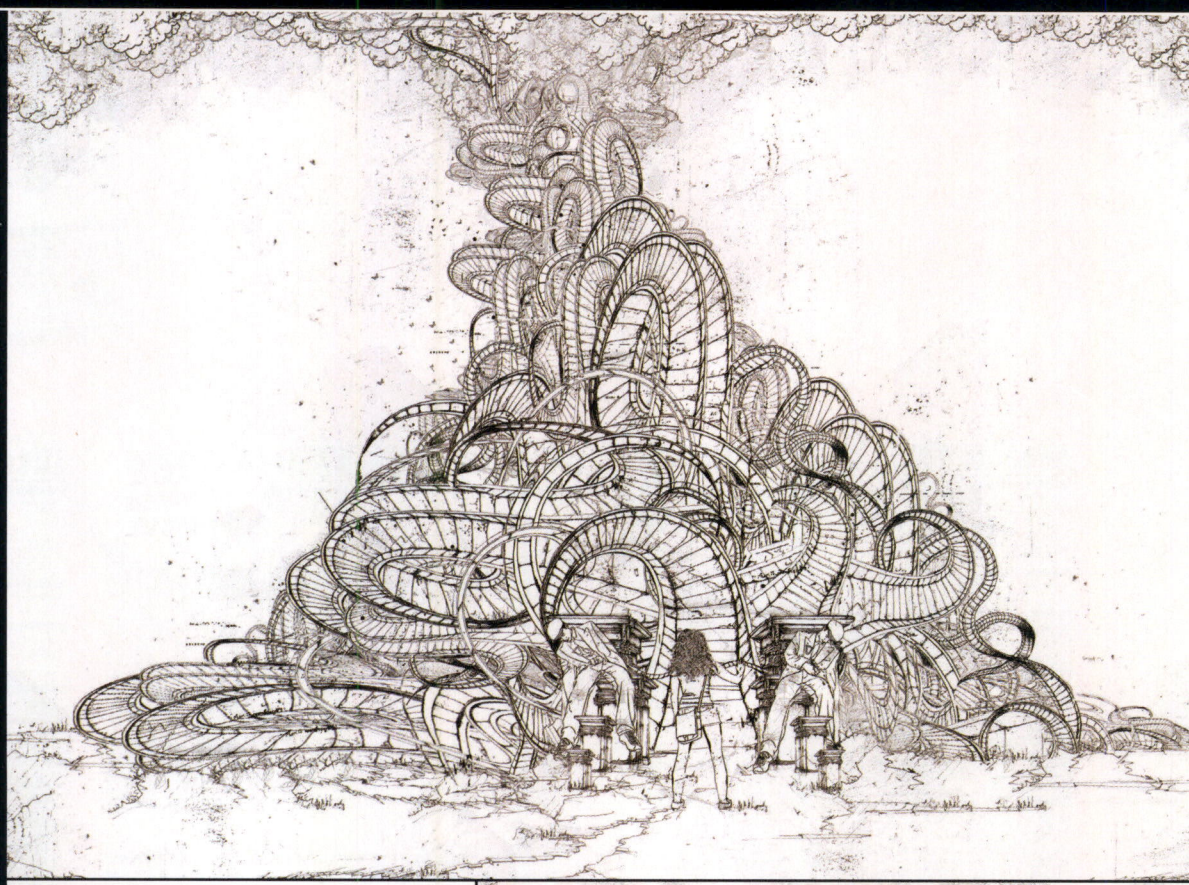
Neal Murren

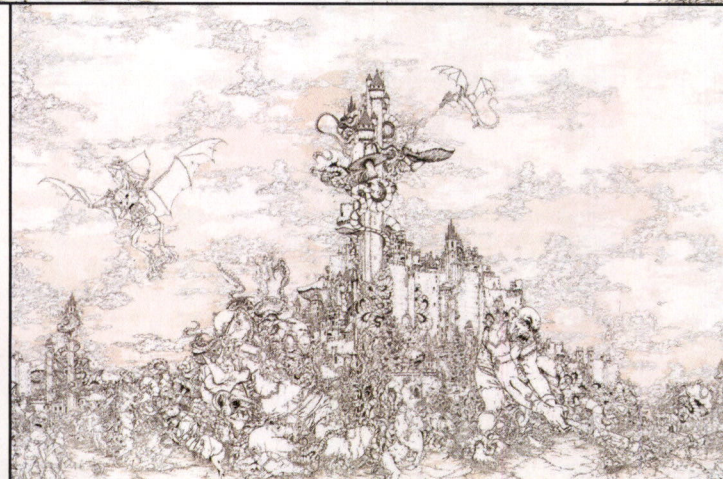
Neal Murren is a recent graduate with bags of talent. His aims are clear: "I want to provide something different to the clean vector styles that have dominated the market. My aim is to become self-dependent in terms of not having to rely on clients for an income."

Combining a mixture of traditional pen and pencil mixed with subtle digital colouring techniques in *Photoshop* and *Illustrator*, Neal's ambition is to harness his talent in the form of "a massive fairytale book," which he informs us is just started but will take a couple of years to make. Describing his style as "dirty but pretty", Neal starts out with rough sketches, digitally piecing them together in *Photoshop* before adding vectors and colour. ca-p

[w] www.nealmurren.com
[e] neal_murren@yahoo.co.uk

With a fairytale style that screams originality and talent, Neal Murren is a fresh illustrator ready to take on the industry...





BRAND NEW WEBSITE!

www.computerarts.co.uk

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The *Computer Arts* website has undergone a radical makeover. Direct your browser to www.computerarts.co.uk and take a look. We've gone back to the drawing board to create an all-new online design portal, where you'll find the very best hardware and software reviews, downloadable tutorials, all the latest news from the creative industries, and much, much more.

The new-look site will not only feature exciting content from *Computer Arts* and *Computer Arts Projects*, but also sister magazines *Mac Format* and *3D World*, the latter providing superb resources for both animators and 3D modellers.

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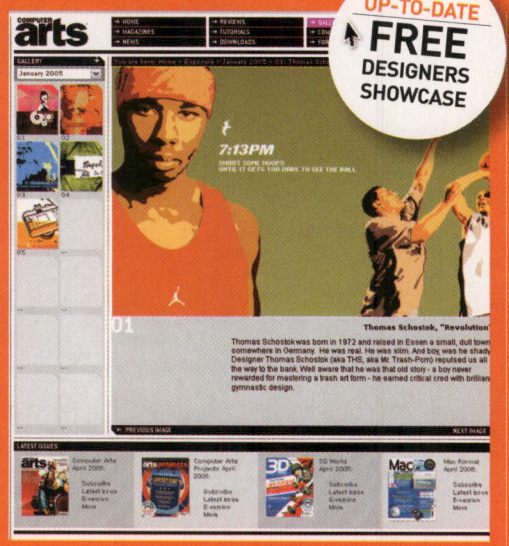

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2 Exposure gallery
Every month, we'll showcase the best in contemporary design in our extensive online gallery – the only place to see and be seen. So go on, submit your work and let your artistry be an inspiration to others. Who knows? You may even get an exciting commission out of it!

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If you want to know how to master a new digital creative technique, whether it's in *Photoshop* or *Illustrator*, web design, 3D or animation, you'll find what you're looking for in our new Tutorials section. We'll feature a selection of free tutorials to download and more in-depth premium tutorials, all in PDF format.

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Feature:

Back to the drawing board?

It's probably too early to tell, but illustration's shift in style away from the clean lines of the vector in favour of a more personal, 'hand-made aesthetic' could be more than just a trend...

Since the 1980s, artists have grappled with the creative potential which computers promised and, thanks to that struggle, illustrators today find themselves at the place where art, photography and all the digital disciplines have begun to converge. It's creative payback time.

The computer has been happily integrated with the artist's traditional resources for some time now; it has become part of a larger toolset rather than an alternative. But artists have begun to rediscover the other items which make up their armoury, finding new ways to integrate and understand them with new technology. This return to the source comes at a time when illustration has broken loose from its traditional confines among the magazines and books, bringing a newly invigorated art form to the attention of a growing audience hungry for new visual experiences.

Trends and their followers

Everyone is agreed that change is in the air, including David Foldvari, an artist at the top of his game: "There's definitely a reaction to things looking like they were made by a computer," he says. David has noticed that this reaction isn't confined to the visual: "You can see the same thing in music too. Dance music has taken a back seat and there's now more of a live sound." This would make sense, because music is another field that has embraced the potential of the digital era.

An up-and-coming illustrator, Billie Jean typifies a breed of artist happy not to obscure their talent behind layers of technique: "The accessibility of digital technology naturally resulted in a lot of program-led imagery." The result: "The saturation of computer generated work has predictably led to a move back towards a more hand-crafted aesthetic." This isn't a rejection of the digital, just a reconsideration.

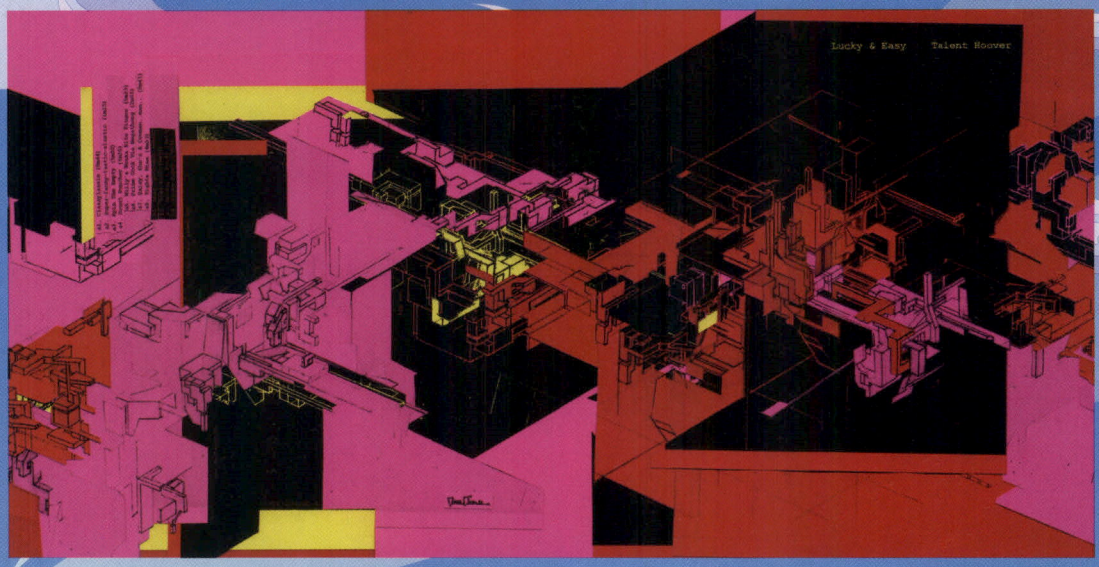
As the organic style takes hold, so the seeds of its own downfall are being sown, and there's another reaction waiting to happen. As Billie Jean puts it: "I'm sure the tables will turn again!" And from this he draws a notable conclusion: "It's important to be true to yourself and make work that isn't slavishly influenced by trends." Inevitably illustrators will be asked to produce work which looks current, that can't be helped. "But it's like anything," says David Foldvari, "there will always be loads of people trying to jump on the wagon."

Although following trends means you're never going to set them, the temptation is still there, particularly when they're still new. For this Billie Jean has a musical analogy of his own: "There will always be 'Milli Vanilli' illustrators. They come and go."

The digital goods

Digital tools and techniques are here to stay. Michelle Thompson, whose beautifully textured collages find favour with the likes of Penguin and Italian designers Aspesi, ›

Illustration by: Miho Sadogawa, [w] www.eroticdragon.com



This page: The work of Boris Tellegen, aka Delta, is a fantastic hybrid of graffiti and engineering diagrams, the roots of the artist's development. Heavily reliant on manual processes himself, Boris has noted a trend in illustration more generally: "It seems that things are going back to basics," he says. "It's about good hand work, where you can see the actual hand of the artist."

provides an excellent example of why this is so. She begins the story with some less-than-surprising news: "I'm relying more and more on digital processes."

Now, for an artist used to relying on texture and found elements, this revelation was unsettling, but Michelle says: "Now I find it exciting!" The reason for this excitement is both simple and somehow subtle: "Working digitally has really sped up my working process and," here's the clincher, "made me more spontaneous in my decision-making." The outcomes are starting to become unpredictable across a much wider spectrum of the design community now that the computer is no longer a novelty.

Billie Jean makes the point clearer: "Technology will always offer new and exciting possibilities." The trouble is that, "Most technology-led illustrators tend to produce dull and homogenous work." David Foldvari backs him up: "The problem with digital work is that it's very reliant on technique. Anyone can learn how to do it." The golden rule is: never let technology into the driving seat.

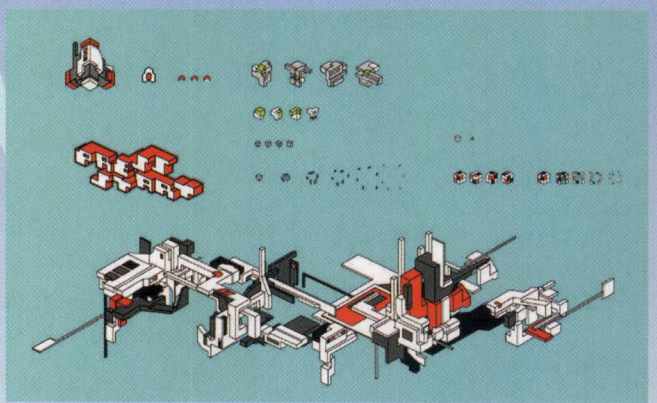
"Jasper Goodall invented a lot of that vector art look," says David, who has high praise for the artist's originality but points out that his work was very quickly taken onboard by the hoards of Milli Vanillis out there. In this respect, a more personal approach favours those who have the underlying skills: "The hand-drawn stuff is kind of difficult to copy," agrees David. "For me that's an escape route from getting ripped off." Wheat from the chaff.

What they want

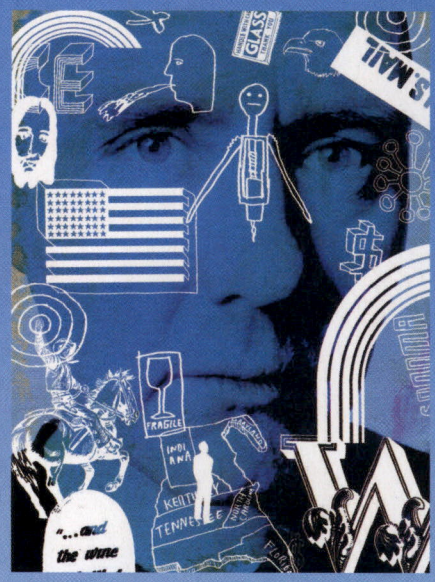
"They are getting more daring, people aren't as scared of illustration any more," says David Foldvari, talking about the people that pay the bills, the commissioners of illustration. It seems that the world is waking up to the rich seam of creativity that illustration has uncovered.

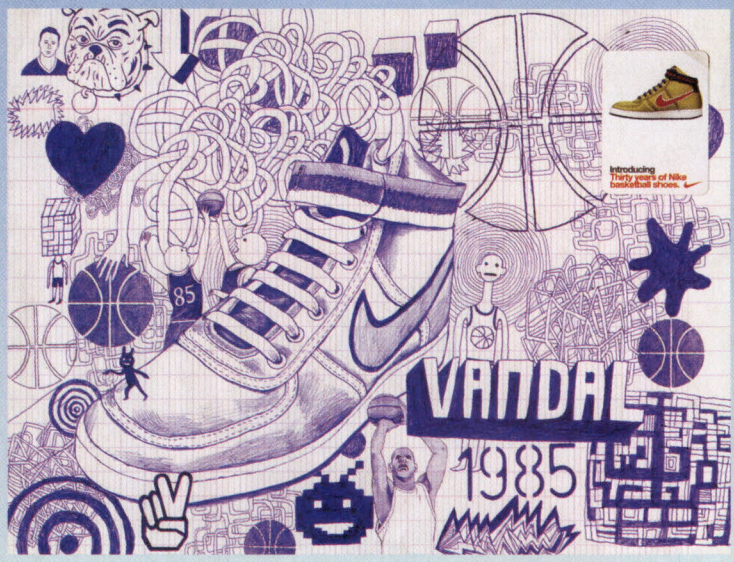
By way of example we hear from Boris Tellegen, the artist who also goes by the tag 'Delta', "I feel that clients are getting more daring," he says. "But then I've been in the business longer now, maybe they just have more faith." They certainly must do because Boris has had some odd jobs come his way: "I just did a canvas, 2x2 metres, which will be on display at a tradeshow and then cut up and made into shoes." How that came about we may never know, but Boris does add that: "I like weird commissions." Just as well really.

There's a lot of great work being done at the moment and consequently there's a growing audience for illustration. This is overcoming what looked like an entrenched dislike for the medium, particularly among advertising agencies. David ›



This page: "There are a lot of illustrators who are spanning and blurring the divide between art and illustration." Billie Jean believes this progressive attitude is something of an issue for illustration: "The gulf between these and more conservative illustrators is widening."





Education, education, education

"I have a nice life," says Michelle Thompson. "The more work I have, the more work is generated from it." But Michelle adds a note of caution: "Being successful as an illustrator isn't just about being talented; you have to be able to market yourself."

Michelle is concerned about the huge increase in the number of illustrators: "College courses are doubling in capacity, teaching staff and resources are being cut back and the industry can't support the number of graduates." But David Foldvari doesn't see this as necessarily damning for one simple reason: "Though there are loads more illustrators, 98 per cent of them are rubbish."

The main problem as David sees it is with the nature of the courses themselves, which simply don't prepare people for the real world: "They train you to be this big art director type who only gets great work to do." Unfortunately this isn't realistic: "That job just doesn't exist."

A word of advice for aspiring illustrators from Michelle Thompson: "Being successful as an illustrator isn't just about being talented." It may come as a surprise but, "You have to be able to market yourself."

Foldvari traces this to a period of creative deficit: "It stems from the mid-90s when just about all illustration was crap." David isn't one to mince his words.

Of course there are exceptions, but on the whole the point is hard to argue with. The cause of this malaise was almost certainly the fact that illustration was busy digesting the arrival of the computer, like a python having recently swallowed a deer.

And now, as this comment from Billie Jean exemplifies, the rewards are being reaped: "I've had some really exciting jobs and worked with some very interesting people lately." Then, perhaps fearing the fickle hand of fate he adds: "I realise that this isn't necessarily the experience of other illustrators and it could all end tomorrow." This seems a bit unlikely, "I shouldn't be so pessimistic; I'm starting to sound like Morrisey!"

Convergence

It's all starting to come together for illustration; there's a huge array of possibilities waiting to be explored and a climate appreciative of personal expression. This is an exciting time, "There are a growing number of illustrators who don't want to be confined by traditional definitions," says Billie Jean. As proof he cites: "The proliferation of 'toy' figurines by the likes of Gary Baseman, James Jarvis and Pete Fowler."

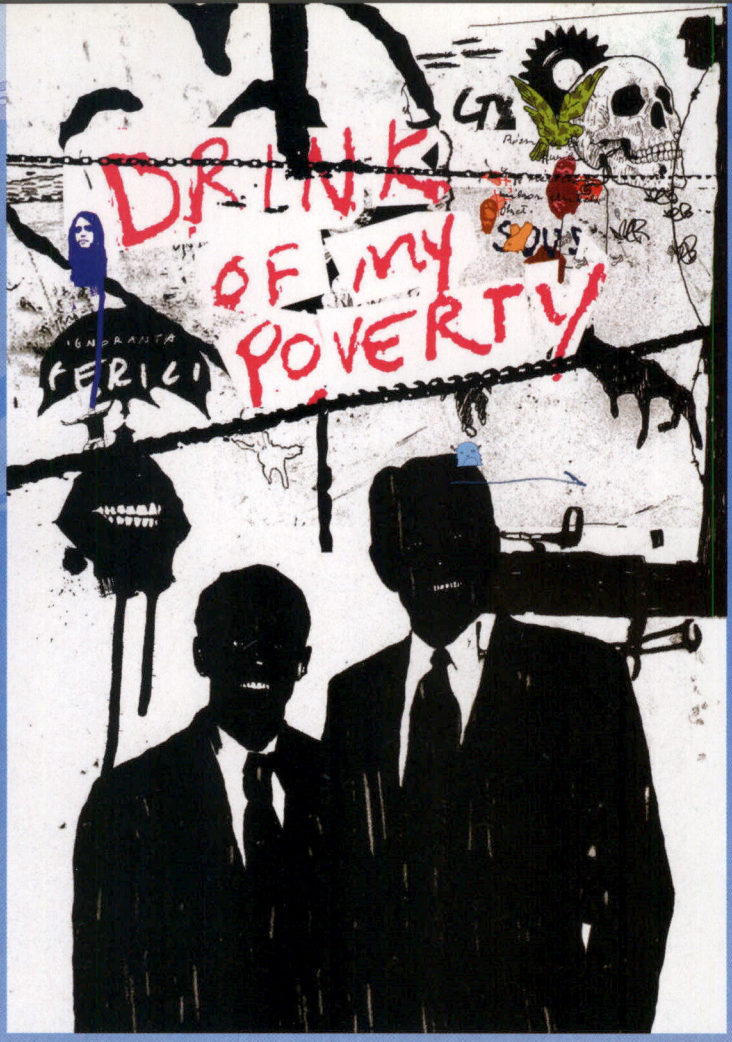
Boris Tellegen points to another avenue of expression which has converged with illustration: graffiti. According to Boris, in mixing with other genres, graffiti has matured a lot. "This is the place to give shouts out to Justin Koopman," he says, crediting another artist who, under the name 'oase', is leading graffiti's crossover.

"I mostly produce personal work," says Boris, "Most of my commissioned work is personal as well." Billie Jean has a similarly humanistic take on things: "I guess my work is principally about making some sense of my world. I am continually trying to extend and explore my creative potential." The arena chosen for integrating this diverse field of influences is the personal.

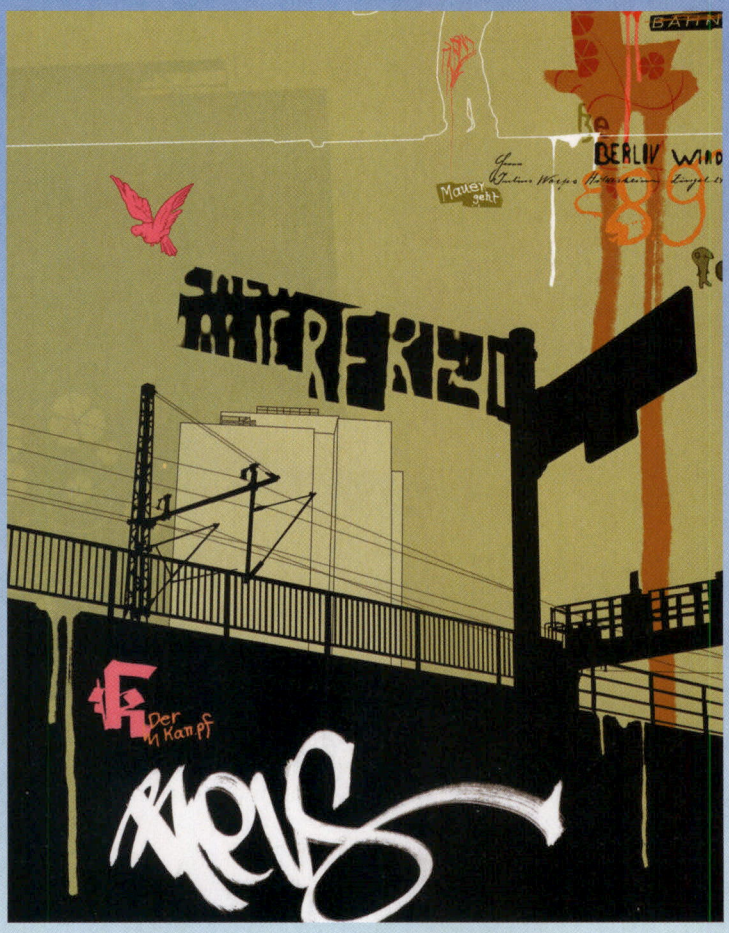
The momentum which currently lies behind the resurgence of illustration can be tracked to this convergence of influences and the willingness of progressive artists to take full advantage of it. Billie Jean's unifying sentiment sums up the aspiration perfectly: "I look forward to the day when the conventional distinctions don't exist." If it is a trend, it's one worth following. **ca-p**

See more work by the illustrators who contributed to this feature: David Foldvari **[w]** www.davidfoldvari.co.uk, Boris Tellegen **[w]** www.deltainc.nl, Michelle Thompson **[w]** www.contact-me.net/michellethompson, Billie Jean **[w]** www.billiejean.co.uk.

Michelle Thompson's beautifully constructed collages are taking an increasingly digital course. "I'm relying more and more on digital processes," she says, something which initially caused some concern. Not any more though: "Now I find it exciting."



This page: David Foldvari's superbly dark and original work relies on the artist's drawing skills for its intensity. "The problem with the digital stuff you see at the moment is that it's just soulless," says David. And they're going about fixing that problem in the wrong way – with even higher resolutions and so on.



Cash rules everything around me

The Association of Illustrators has recently published an interesting study entitled *Illustration Fees and Standards of Pricing 2005*. Freely available via the association's website, the report makes essential reading for illustrators.

Silvia Baumgart, AOI Manager, summarised the report's findings by saying that, "You can see how complicated the whole thing is, it takes agents many years to develop good pricing skills." The report is not entirely encouraging.

Notably, though, prices have not fallen for illustrative work, neither have they kept pace with the economy at large. "Prices are stagnating at the moment," says Silvia. "They have been for the last 20 years." That means illustrators in the 70s and 80s were earning much better money than their modern counterparts, according to AOI figures.

The main cause of this state of affairs is that illustration has not developed a profile to match its creative reputation. "For example," Silvia points out, "there's a much wider range of famous photographers than there are illustrators." Fortunately, the solution is relatively simple, in theory at least: "Artists need to put their names to the work." It's all about awareness.

You can find out more about this study at **[w]** www.theaoi.com/documents.html.

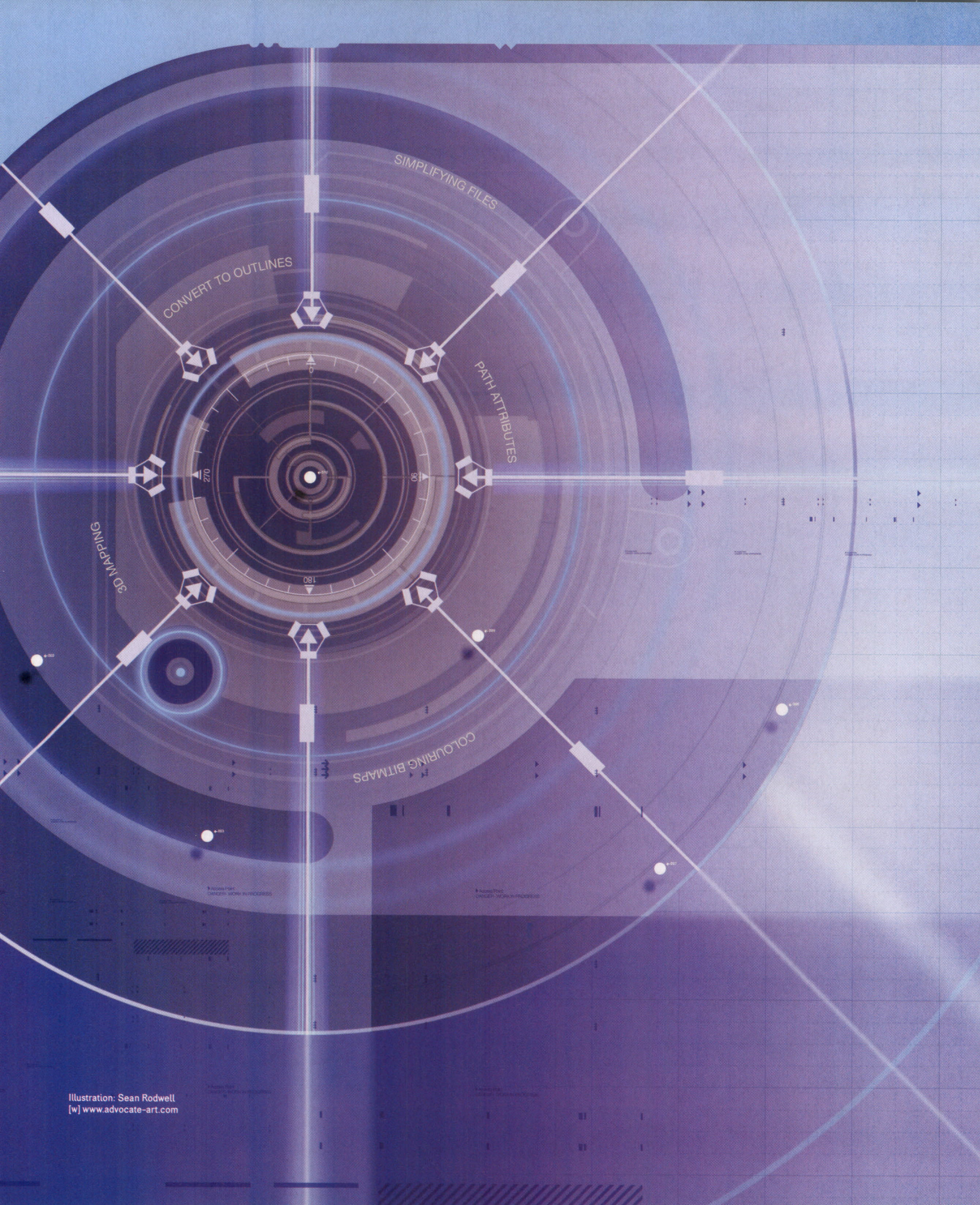


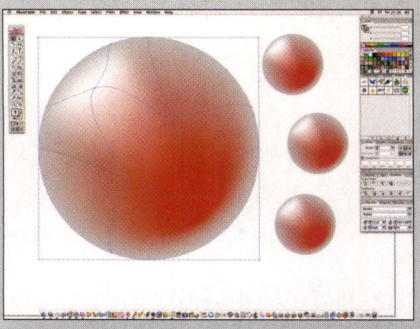
Illustration: Sean Rodwell
[w] www.advocate-art.com

Feature:
40 top tool techniques

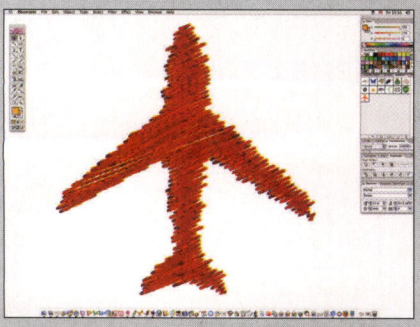
Discover the hidden powers of *Illustrator* and *FreeHand* with these essential tips from top designers...

Using *Illustrator* or *FreeHand* is a bit like playing the guitar – within a few weeks you can get a basic grounding of the thing, but it takes a lifetime to master. Well, with these top tips, we're not promising you'll come out a master of vector graphics software, but they will put you well on your way. Each one of these tips refers to a more obscure, hidden feature of the software that you may not know about, but they're features that can boost your illustration skillset and technique.

So, fire up your app of choice, or even both, and prepare to delve into the secret techniques that professional illustrators use on a day-to-day basis. Whether you're a novice, intermediate or professional user, there's some essential advice for you... >

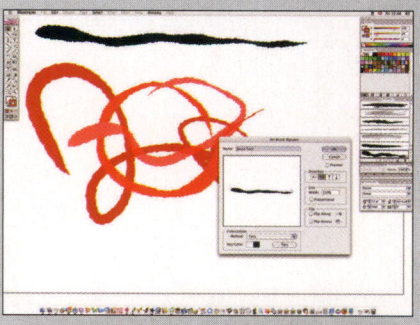


Tip 1. The Gradient Mesh tool can be used to create extremely realistic-looking globes. These spheres took seconds to create using only three colours.



Tip 3. This interesting effect was created by overlaying several different scribble effects in various colours and matting them together with several transparency modes.

Tip 6. Use the Symbolism tool to create complex, random patterns quickly. *Illustrator* includes tools to further modify attributes like size, colour and direction.



Tip 7. Art brushes can be created very simply from almost any artwork. Drag your design into the Brushes palette then use the Brush tool to paint.

Tip 9. Bitmap TIFFs can be placed into your artwork and coloured to match the rest of your design using the Fill colour swatch. Use CMYK, RGB and Spot colours.

20 Illustrator tips

1 Spreading gradients

The Gradient Mesh tool is useful for when you want a gradient to spread out in a random-looking but controllable way. Select the shape you want to fill and click with the Gradient Mesh tool. This creates the initial mesh, which can be filled with colour where the mesh points meet. More clicks increase the density of the mesh.

2 Convert to outlines

Some effects and filters won't work on type unless it's has been converted to outlines. Using the Selection tool, click on the text that you want to work on and choose Create Outlines from the Type menu. Once the typography has been converted in this way, the Bézier points can be edited like any other object in *Illustrator.*

3 Scribbling effects

It's possible to give objects the impression of having been hastily coloured in with a pen. This result can be achieved by using the Scribble Effect. Choose Effect>Stylise>Scribble... and a dialog will appear with a bewildering array of options available. Luckily, *Illustrator* ships with a useful set of presets in the Settings dropdown menu.

4 Magic touches

The Magic Wand tool in *Illustrator* behaves in a different way to its counterpart in *Photoshop.* In some ways it's more powerful, enabling you to select (or deselect, which is just as useful) objects with the same or similar Fill colour, Stroke colour or Stroke weight. Double-click the tool to bring up the Magic Wand options.

5 Converting to guides

Dragging rulers on to a document to act as guides is pretty handy, but did you know you can convert pretty much any path or object into a guide? Select the path you want to make into a guide and choose View>Guides>Make Guides from the menu. Luckily the process is reversible should you need the shape back again (View>Guides>Release Guides).

6 Spraying symbols

The Symbolism tool is one of *Illustrator's* most powerful effects. Choose a symbol from the Symbol palette and, using the Symbolism tool, begin to spray instances of the object. The strength of the effect is that the sprayed symbols can be modified with a range of tools found by holding down the Symbolism icon in the Tools palette.

7 Different brush strokes

Brushes are great for adding a hand-drawn effect to your work. There are four types: calligraphy, which are angled to create the look of writing with a calligraphy pen; Scatter, which randomly add symbols to the path; Art, which can mimic effects such as charcoal; and Pattern, which curve pattern tiles along the path. Brushes can be applied retrospectively to any path.

8 Easy graphs

Creating graphs in *Illustrator* is simplicity itself, and they can look amazing, too. Double-click the Graph tool to define the graph type (there are nine graph types to choose from) and set other options. Click OK then drag the tool to define the graph area on the document. Enter the data and then customise the graph's components using the Direct Selection tool.

9 Colouring bitmaps

Just like the good old days of *QuarkXPress*, bitmap TIFFs placed in *Illustrator* can be coloured. Ensuring that the file is not greyscale, RGB or CMYK, and is a simple bitmap, place the image (File>Place) and then with the TIFF selected change the Fill colour. Attempting to apply a stroke won't have any effect.

10 Dividing objects

Using the Knife tool on an object will divide it into pieces, not simply cut the paths in the way that the Scissors tool does. By default, the Knife tool cuts in a slightly random, difficult-to-predict curve, but you can ensure that it cuts objects in a straight line by simply holding down the Alt key in Windows or the Option key in OS X.

11 Sprials and arcs

Creating spirals by hand is a difficult job, but *Illustrator* offers a flexible Spiral tool in the Tools palette to do all the hard work for you. Perhaps even more useful than this is the Arc tool, which can draw arcs between two points. Usefully, the ends of the arc can snap to Bézier path points for ultimate accuracy in your work.

12 Lassoing skills

The Lasso tool is another way of quickly selecting objects on the artboard. It works very much like selecting objects with the Direct Selection tool, which has the disadvantage of selecting all the points within a dragged marquee. The Lasso tool can be used to select odd-shaped objects and exclude others, because the selection area is drawn.

13 Experimental warping

Warp Effects (Effects>Warp) are handy for distorting type, but most people only use the default settings. Get adventurous and see what happens when you swap the horizontal and vertical axis or give the distortion values negative settings. Experiment on other objects – even simple shapes such as rectangles will benefit from some crazy warping.

14 Rasterising effects

Bitmap filters can only be used on raster images, such as placed TIFFs and JPEGs, but you can rasterise any *Illustrator* artwork and then apply the filters to the new bitmap artwork. Select the item you want to convert into a raster image and choose Rasterise... from the Effects menu. You're given a choice of resolutions and can even give the artwork a clipping path.

15 Inserting glyphs

OpenType fonts offer amazing flexibility and options by including huge character sets. When you want to access the obscure dingbats and alternate characters, Adobe has an extremely useful Glyphs palette (Type>Glyphs). It doesn't support drag and drop, unfortunately, but if you double-click with the Type tool, the glyph will be inserted into your text.

16 Path attributes

If you've drawn a stroked path and wish you could stroke the edges of that path or turn it into an object, you can do so by outlining the path. By some strange *Illustrator* Voodoo, expanding the path (Object>Expand) will not keep some path attributes such as Round Caps, but outlining the path (Object>Path>Outline Stroke) will.

17 Envelope Distortion

Warping tools are great, but sometimes you need to distort an object or text to a specific shape. Normally, this would take a lot of hand-tweaking, but with the Envelope Distortion it's a doddle. Make sure the object you want to distort is below the target object in the shape of the distortion you want, and choose Object>Envelope Distort>Make with Top Object.

18 3D mapping

Mapping artwork onto rotated and extruded 3D shapes is easy. Ensure that you drag the artwork you want to be mapped to the Symbols palette first, extrude your shape (Effect>3D>Extrude & Bevel) and click the Map Art button. You can step through all the faces that can have art applied, simply by choosing your Symbol from the dropdown menu and resizing if necessary.

19 Sharp-looking pixels

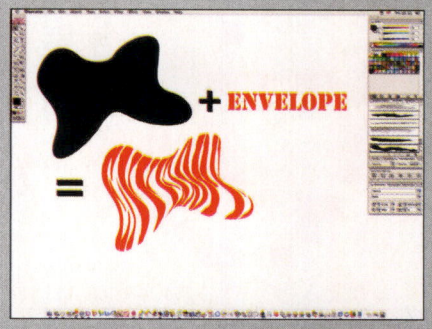
If you use *Illustrator* to create graphics for the web, *Flash* interfaces or icons, it may be useful to work in Pixel Preview mode (View>Pixel Preview). At 100 per cent, this looks exactly like using *Illustrator* in normal view, but as you zoom in, you can see pixels rather than smooth vectors. Usefully, points snap to pixels, creating artwork that looks sharp.

20 Simplifying files

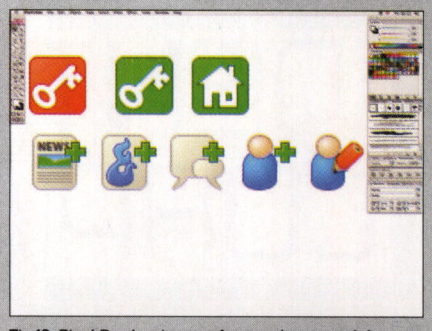
If you want to reduce the number of points on complex artwork, such as *Streamlined* scans, to reduce file size, use the Simplify command (Object>Path>Simplify). Used judiciously, the results can be invisible while removing a great many unnecessary points. At the other extreme, it can be used to create shapes of cartoon-like simplicity that echo their former shape. >

Tip 13. There are times when you want to bend and distort letters into a specific shape. The Warp filters aren't up to the task, so use the Envelope Distortion.

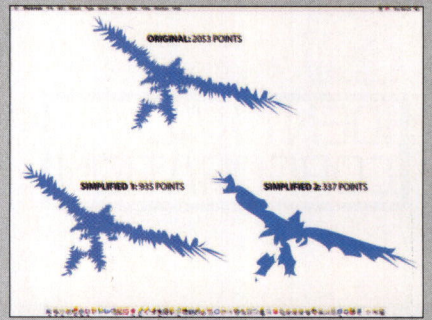
Tip 15. OpenType fonts can have thousands of extra characters. *Illustrator's* Glyphs palette takes the strain out of trying to remember where they all are.



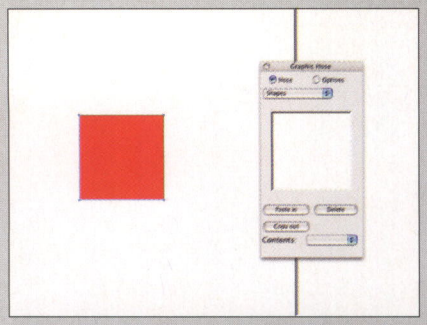
Tip 17. Envelope Distortion is the answer when the Warp tools aren't up to the job. This feature enables you to distort an object into a specific shape.



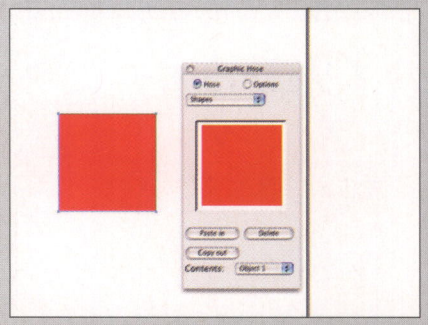
Tip 19. Pixel Preview is great for creating artwork for websites and interfaces at a fixed resolution. Best of all, artwork snaps to pixels ensuring sharp artwork.



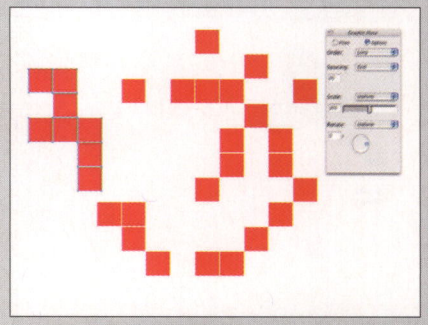
Tip 20. Too many control points in your artwork threatening to choke imagesetters or *Flash*? Reduce them invisibly or obviously with the Simplify tool.



Tip 2. Using a shape that repeats well is essential when using the Graphic Hose tool. A square is the simplest and perhaps most effective choice.



Tip 3. Loading your Graphic Hose is easy. Open the Graphic Hose window, give your hose a name, then copy your chosen shape into the window.



Tip 4. To create effective patterns with your Graphic Hose, set the Spacing to Grid and the Order to Loop. Then experiment with different effects.

Tip 7. Using the Smooth/Rough tool, you can roughen the edges of your type to make it look aged, or like it's been through a photocopier.

Tip 11. Don't be tempted to use excessive levels with the Rough/Smooth tool. An amount of as little as ten will often give you the best result.

20 FreeHand tips

1 Quick and effective results

The Graphic Hose tool is a bit of an unsung hero of the *FreeHand MX* armoury — not many designers appreciate the benefits of using this clever little device, thinking of it more as a gimmick. It not only saves time in creating patterns, but it can also be a fantastic creative tool for producing striking and innovative illustrations.

2 Use the correct shape

When using the Graphic Hose tool, make sure you use a shape that repeats well. Usually the best form or shape can fit into a square. When you're using a grid to create a pattern out of your desired shape, you'll soon reap the benefits. A square-based shape works very well as a repeat pattern and can be used to get great tonal effects.

3 Loading your Graphic Hose

The easiest way to get your shape into a Graphic Hose is to copy the shape using Ctrl/Cmnd+C. Then, in the Graphic Hose window that appears, create a new hose simply by using the pull-down menu at the top of the window. Once you've named your new hose, you can then paste your copied shape into the new Graphic Hose window.

4 Creating patterns

Although you can use the Graphic Hose to create random illustrations from various objects, it's a tool that's best used to create patterns and images out of small shapes. Using the Spacing pull-down menu, you should always set your hose to a Grid. This is used to the best effect when the Order of the shape is also set on a Loop.

5 Tracing photography

The Graphic Hose tool can be used to great effect as a 'tracer' of photographs. Import your photograph into a separate layer in *FreeHand MX* and create another layer for your Graphic Hose. Using the tool with the correct settings will help you create great illustrations. Always use a tight grid with a shape that works well, to bring out the details of your photograph.

6 Using multiple shapes

You can use numerous shapes in your Graphic Hose tool to enhance your patterns and illustrations. Again, you need to pick your shapes wisely and copy each shape one after the other into your hose. This effect works best with typography, where you can create a phrase or word out of your Graphic Hose and use it to add extra detail and messages within your illustrations.

7 Smooth/Rough tool

Leaving the Graphic Hose behind, we move on to *FreeHand MX*'s Smooth/Rough tool, which can be used to add detail to shapes and clean-looking objects within your work. It can also be used cleverly to roughen up your type for a 'vintage' look, especially if you're trying to create the effect of a stamp or photocopied document as in this image.

8 Turn text to outlines

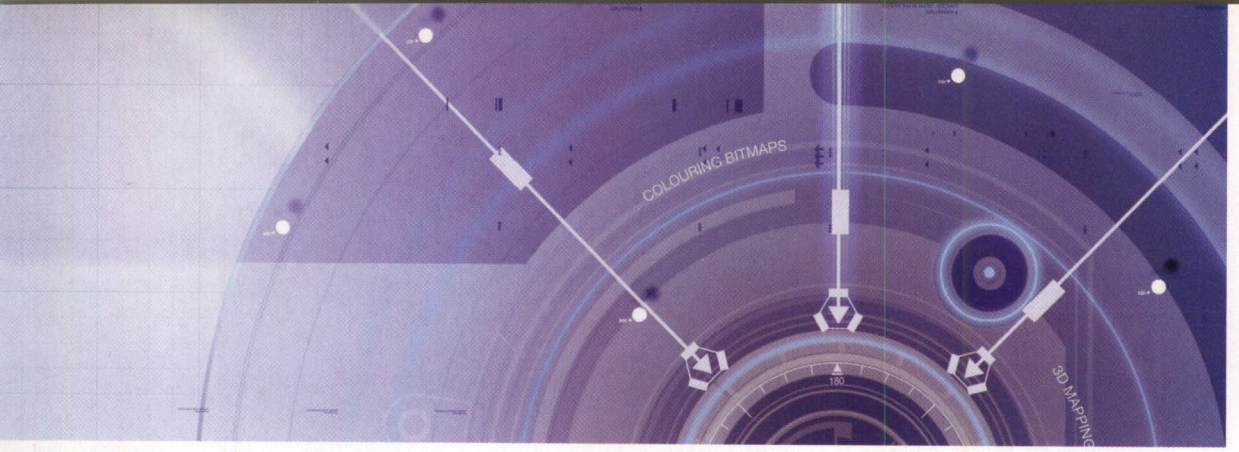
If you're going to roughen up typefaces, you'll need to turn them into outlines before using the Rough/Smooth tool. The best way to do this is by getting your typography right and set exactly how you want it to be. Once you're happy with how it's set, you can turn your type to outlines using the shortcut command of Ctrl/Cmnd+Shift+P.

9 Work at large sizes

To get the best results possible from the Rough/Smooth tool you should always work at a large scale, because using the tool at smaller sizes won't enable you to get the most out of it. When you've finished creating the shape or typography you want to roughen, simply expand its size before using the Rough/Smooth tool.

10 Circular shapes

The Rough/Smooth tool loses some of its magic when used on circular shapes, so try to avoid using this tool on shapes that are predominantly round or have complex curves. The straighter the edges of your shape, the better the effects you can expect; the more complex the shape gets, the harder it is to use this tool to its best advantage.



11 Less is more

It's easy to get a little carried away with the use of the Rough/Smooth tool, but bear in mind that this is an effect that benefits from being used sparingly. You'll find that the lesser the effect you use, the better the results turn out to be. Sometimes when using too much of the same effect, it makes your objects look overdone.

12 Connector tool textures

The Connector tool in *FreeHand MX* was created to be used for flowcharts and linking boxes or shapes to each other within presentations and data files. You can use this as a creative tool to get things done quickly and effectively without any fuss. As it creates lines and arrows, it can be used for textural effects that look great when adding details to your illustrations.

13 Link your flowcharts

To use the Connector tool effectively you need to highlight one box within your flowchart with your cursor, then click, hold and drag your mouse to link each box with a separate arrow. You can then do the same with other boxes and link them all together in exactly the same way. This saves the hassle of having to draw individual arrows and lines for each box.

14 Illustration effects

Because the Connector tool is great for linking shapes to each other with a separate line and arrow, you can use it to create many linear layers and effects in your illustrations. Do this by continually linking shapes with the tool until you have many different layers and links all over your illustration. This will create a detailed effect of lines and arrows.

15 Merging shapes

The Blend tool in *FreeHand MX* is a feature that can enable you to create a number of interesting variations for linear illustrations. By clicking on two different shapes and blending them, you can create a 'metamorphosis' between the two that merges colours, line thickness as well as shapes throughout the stages of the blend.

16 Clever blending tricks

This is a clever way to add a twist to your use of the Blend tool. Choose two shapes that you want to blend together and click on certain points of each shape. Then when you merge the two shapes together, the blend is distorted so you end up with a twisted abstract animation of the images morphing together at different points.

17 Line thickness

Make the outline point size of one of the shapes really thick and the other as fine as a hairline. Don't fill the shapes with any colour. When you merge them using the Blend tool they'll combine gradually from a thick outline to a thin outline. Because the shapes have no fill, you can also see the beauty of the process underneath each shape.

18 See-through effects

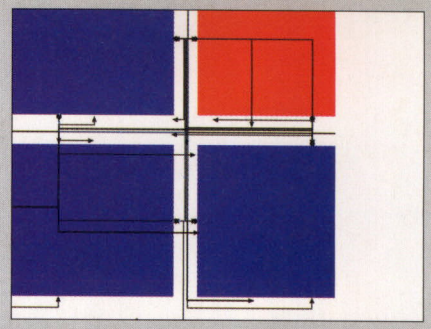
The Transparency effect is created by going to the Object section of your Graphic Tool menu. First, make sure your object has a solid colour in it. Then highlight the colour in your Object menu and you'll see a pull-down menu headed with 'Basic'. Click and drag down this menu until you get to 'Lens'. In the Lens menu you can experiment with the Transparency effect.

19 Colour effects

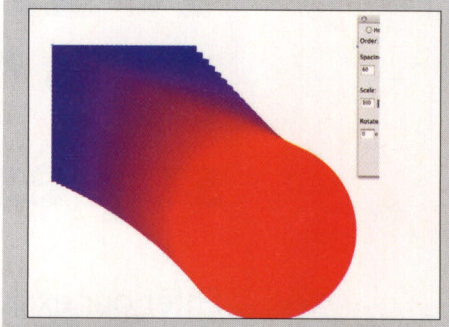
The Transparency effect is best used with mixing shapes and colours. You can overlay one shape of red on top of a solid blue colour and then turn the red shape into a Transparency object. This automatically mixes the two shapes together and you're left with a purple colour where the red shape has overlaid the blue shape.

20 A whiter world

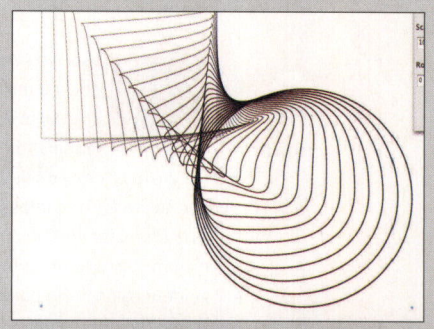
Try using white as the main colour for your Transparency effects. You'll find that you can add fantastic, light, layered effects to your work in this way. Use these white effects to create windows in vector illustrations or for adding tonal effects of light to areas of an illustration. You can also experiment with overlapping white layers. cap



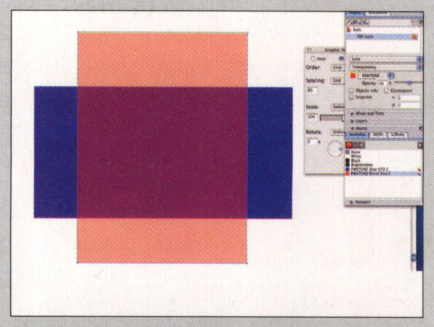
Tip 13. Use the Connector tool to link flowcharts together so that you don't have to draw separate arrows and lines for every box.



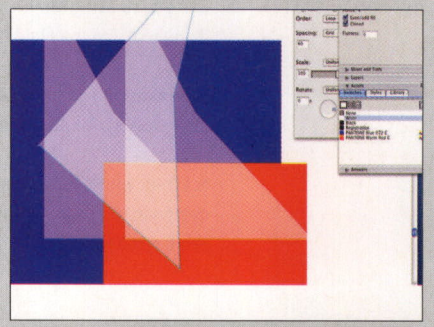
Tip 15. Use *FreeHand MX's* Blend tool to merge different shapes, such as a square and a circle as pictured here, to create some interesting effects.



Tip 16. The Blend tool can be used to create dramatic, abstract twisted shapes, again from merging two shapes together.



Tip 19. The Transparency effect enables you to overlay coloured shapes to achieve the colour blends you would get if you were mixing paint on a palette.



Tip 20. Using white as your transparency colour enables you to create windows in your vector illustrations or add tonal effects.

Competition
Your chance for T-shirt superstardom

WIN $500 AND GET YOUR T-SHIRT DESIGN PRINTED!

Enter our exclusive competition and get your design on other designers' chests all around the world, plus win $500!

If you've ever wanted to design a T-shirt but never got around to doing it, now's the time to make it happen. For your efforts you could win some amazing prizes in this exclusive competition, in association with Threadless.com.

We're offering a grand prize of $400 for the winner, along with a $100 gift certificate for Threadless.com and a free one-year subscription to *Computer Arts Projects* and *Computer Arts*. You'll also get your work featured in this magazine in a future issue. So carefully read the submission steps and guidelines on these pages, fire up your choice of design software and get going. The closing date is 1 May 2005. You'll find some choice inspiration on the following pages in our exclusive interview and tutorial...

The theme

The T-shirt design must be based around the theme 'how to beat the designer blues'. Think about those times that your creativity runs dry — and how you tackle this. The design can be anything relating to this theme, as long as it adheres to the the submission guidelines on the opposite page.

How to enter

1. Design your T-shirt in *Illustrator*, *FreeHand* or other vector software... or design in a raster program such as *Photoshop*. If you're designing in a raster app, make sure you design it at actual size with a resolution of at least 150dpi.

2. When you're done, transfer your design to one of the templates to be found at **[w]** www.threadless.com/loves.

3. If you're using the *Photoshop* template, save a copy of your design as a GIF. If you're using the *Flash* template, publish your file so that you have an SWF.

4. You will need to create a GIF thumbnail of your submission. The thumbnail must be 100x70 pixels and under 4k.

5. When you have the files ready, and know what you want the title of your design to be, go to **[w]** www.threadless.com/loves and upload your design. You'll need to log in to the site in order to submit your design.

Submit your design at
[w] www.threadless.com/loves

threadless
Nude No More

WIN SUBSCRIPTIONS TO COMPUTER ARTS AND COMPUTER ARTS PROJECTS

Submission guidelines

If a design does not follow the specifications, it can be declined. Here is a list of things that commonly go wrong, supplied by Threadless.com:

Duplicate Submission – Please only submit your design once and do not submit separate submissions for changes in colour, size or placement.

File Dimensions – Thumbnails must be 100 pixels wide by 70 pixels high. Large images must be 640 pixels wide by 480 pixels high.

File Size – The thumbnail must be under 4k and the large image must be under 60kb.

Design Dimensions and Placement – The design must be within a 15x15 inch area and may not extend over shirt seams or be a 'wraparound'.

Too Many Colours – The T-shirt design must have four or less unique colours, no gradients, no photographs, no tiny halftones. Remember, black and white count as colours.

Use Templates – You must use the downloaded templates when creating your design, found at [w] www.threadless.com/loves.

Inappropriate Material – The design must not be overly offensive or contain copyrighted material.

The rules

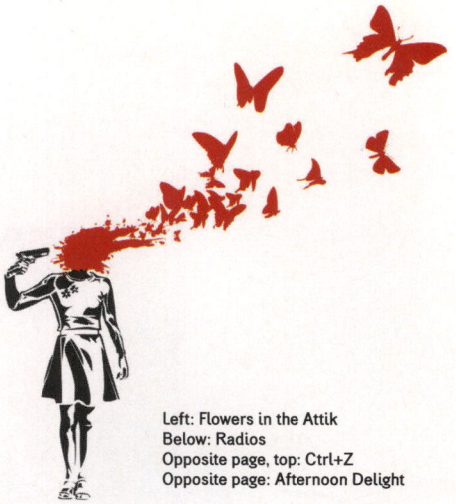
The closing date for this competition is 1 May 2005. Employees of Threadless.com, skinnyCorp, Future, their agents and families are not permitted to enter. See opposite for details on how to enter and above for submission guidelines. Your design will be judged by employees of Threadless.com and the Editor of *Computer Arts Projects*. No other correspondence will be entered into.

Case study:

threadless

Nude No More

There are good ideas, and there are great ideas, and then there's Threadless.com - we meet the men behind the T-shirt design phenomenon...



Left: Flowers in the Attik
Below: Radios
Opposite page, top: Ctrl+Z
Opposite page: Afternoon Delight

Threadless.com is a true success story: a website that invites designers from all over the world to submit T-shirt designs with the opportunity of winning some great prizes, and, perhaps more importantly, achieving global recognition. Started in January 2000 by Chicago-based designers Jacob DeHart and Jake Nickell (pictured, above) Threadless has attracted 40,000 submissions and printed 300 T-shirt designs. Currently over 150,000 users are signed up, with an average of 1,500 joining each week. This is one great idea that has spiralled out of control.

Winning formula

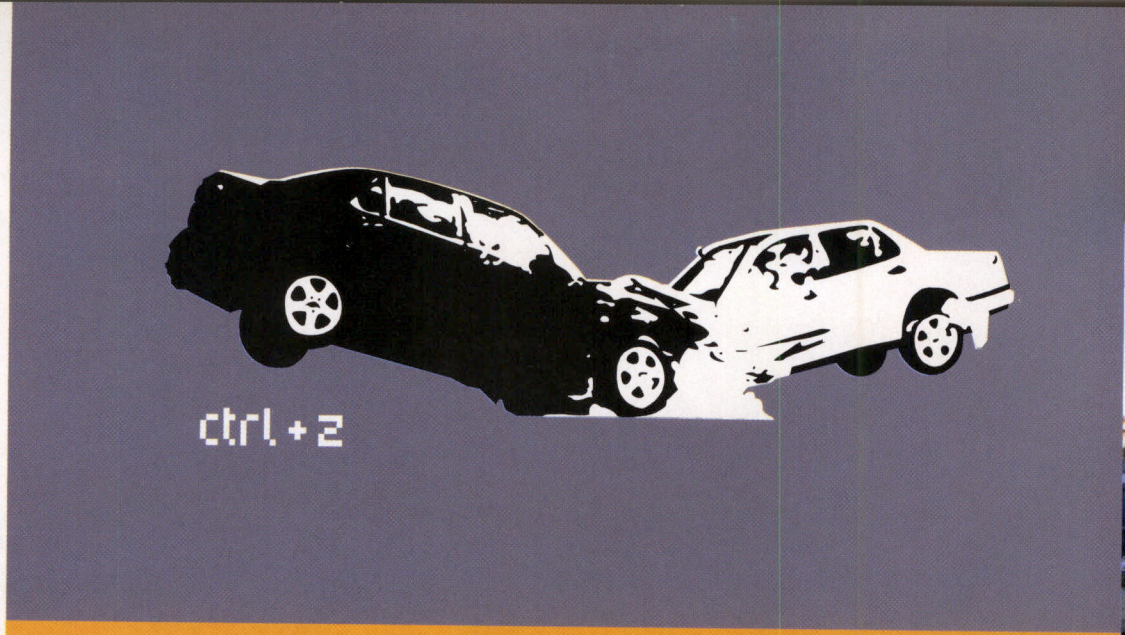
"We started the site after Jake won a T-shirt design competition in London for the New Media Underground Festival," reveals Co-Founder Jacob DeHart. "After winning the competition, we got talking about how cool it was to win, and came up with the idea to have an ongoing competition that is always open for receiving designs and printing and selling the best ones." And so Threadless.com was born, under the parent company of skinnyCorp. Jacob continues: "At the time, Threadless was more of a side-project, almost a hobby, while we were doing web development work under the name skinnyCorp. We still do a lot of web development work through skinnyCorp for clients such as Kohler, Effen Vodka, AMC and Gatorade."

Threadless.com was started as a small outlet for designers to release a little creativity with no boundaries and win a little cash and fame along the way. Jake Nickell continues: "It was also created as a learning experience for us to really understand online commerce and community. Threadless has since became a huge design resource and we're very excited about the future."

Monthly compo

Each month, Threadless runs a competition, inviting artists and illustrators to design a T-shirt, paying $500 to the winner and giving them the now global exposure of getting their shirt printed and worn by designers all over the world. Jake tells us: "We receive on average 50 submissions a day. There have been over eight million scores given to the 40,000+ designs we have received." And that's another unique thing about Threadless – the winning entries aren't chosen exclusively by Jake or Jacob, they're chosen by you. A scoring system enables site users to rate their favourite T-shirts, and at the end of the month, the ones with the most votes win. It's a simple idea, brilliantly executed.

So what do you have to do to make the next best design? Well for an idea, turn to page 30 where Graphic Airlines shows you how it came up with its winning design, *Blitz*. You stand the chance of winning $500



and a subscription to *Computer Arts* and *Projects* (along with us featuring your design in the magazine). Turn to page 26 for entry details and submission guidelines.

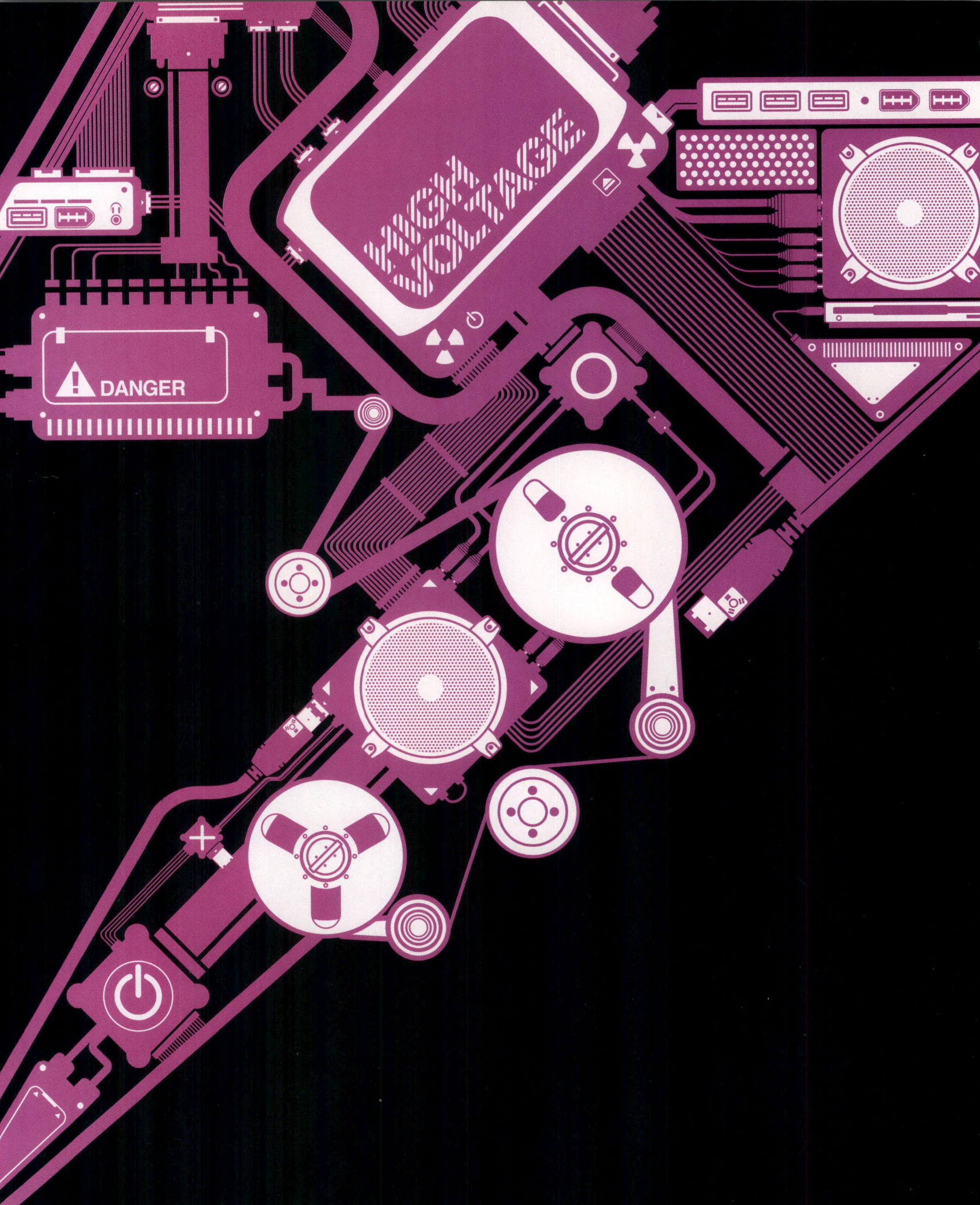
Threadless is not just for professional designers and illustrators. In fact, as Jacob explains, quite the contrary: "I would say the contributors are mostly young designers looking to start building a name for themselves." He continues, "A lot of design students submit to Threadless. We do have a good amount of professional illustrators but what's great about Threadless is that anyone can have their talent discovered."

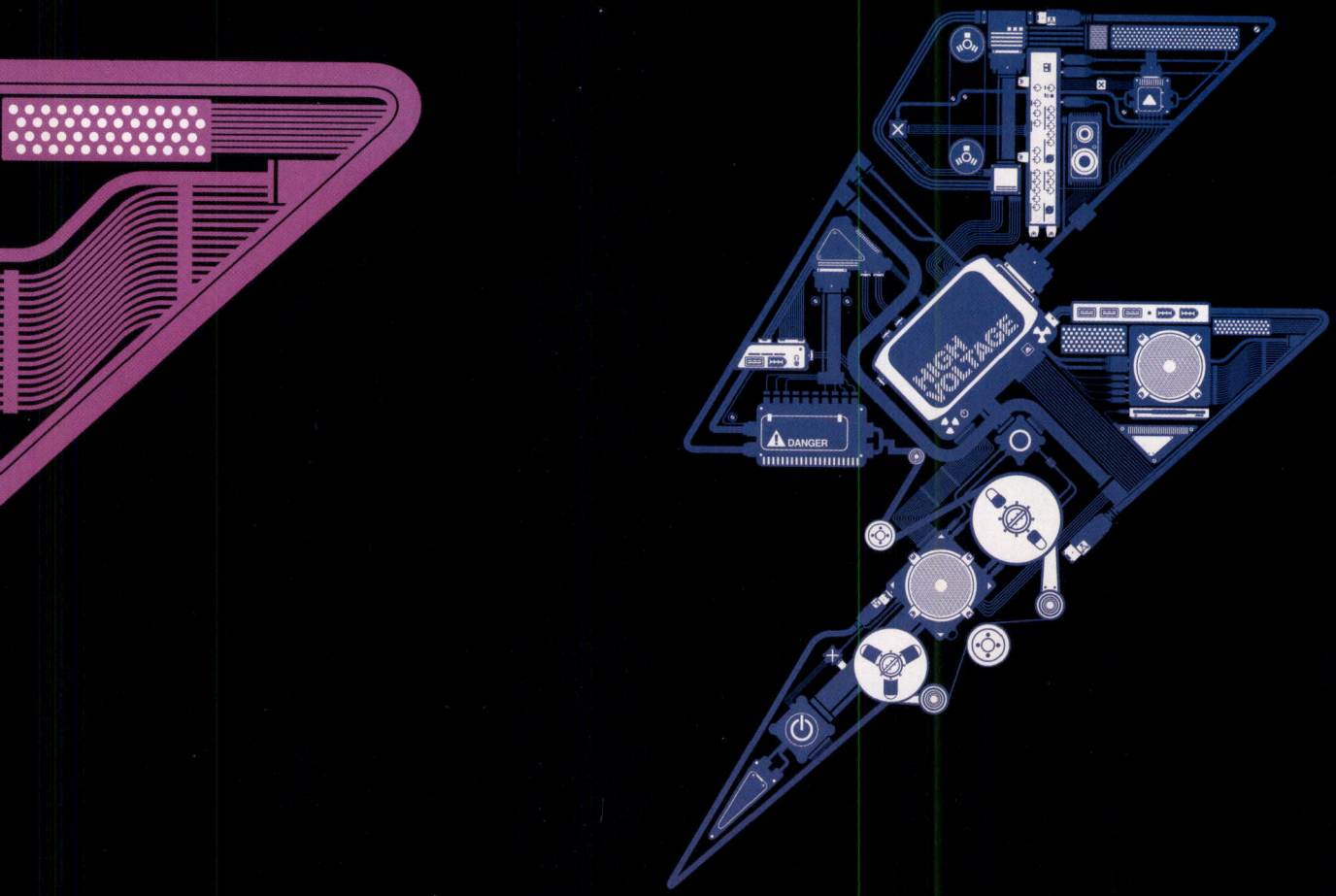
Top T-shirts

When asked about their favourite designs ever submitted, Jake and Jacob have no hesitation. Raving about misterbuster's 'Ctrl+Z' (this page, top), Jake tells us it's a "great, classic, timeless design." Jacob is a little more succinct in his response, telling us his love for megadan's 'Radios' (opposite page) is simply because it's "radical." And the worst? You get the feeling Jake is holding back a little when he points to 'Flowers in the Attik' (opposite page, top) by Jason Byron Nelson, it being "a woman blowing her brains out with butterflies appearing." It just so happens that this is Threadless.com's best-selling shirt, so it can't be that bad. Jacob reveals 'Afternoon Delight' by Chris Bishop (above) as a contender. And we'll leave you to form your own judgement on that one.

Threadless.com continues to draw in more designers all with the desire to get themselves on other designers' chests. Think of it as a place to tout your illustration talent. For Jake and Jacob, it's an idea that is constantly bringing together anyone in the world interested in creativity. And for that, we applaud them. CA-P

[w] www.threadless.com
[w] www.skinnycorp.com


DANGER



Electrifying T-shirt prints

Discover how to create an award-winning T-shirt design...

On the previous four pages, we've told you all about Threadless.com's monthly T-shirt design competition. In this tutorial, a recent winner of the competition – Graphic Airlines – shows you how it created the design that won favour with the voting public.

There are three main areas of T-shirt design, each of which is outlined over the following pages. The first area covers how to conceptualise and prepare a T-shirt design that fits in with the corporate image of a company, in this case High Voltage Software.

The second part concentrates mainly on the use of Adobe *Illustrator* to turn the concept into a detailed illustration. In the final section you'll find out how to choose the best colour combinations, and position and size the T-shirt print to achieve a winning result.

Expertise provided by Graphic Airlines. See more of the company's work at **[w]** www.graphicairlines.com, and contact **[e]** mail@graphicairlines.com

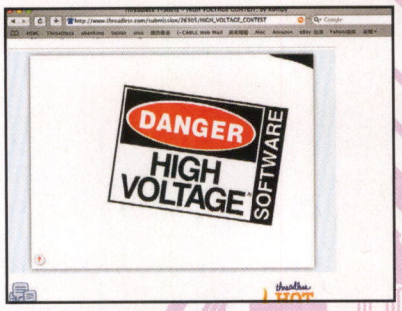
The final blitz.ai file can be found on the *Computer Arts Projects* CD70 in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Blitz T-shirt folder.

Part 1: Preparation

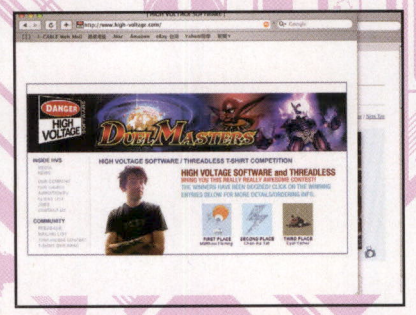
The first thing you need to do is come up with a concept for your T-shirt...

Be consistent

Overall consistency is important when creating a complex print design. Try to avoid too much detail in one part and then over-simplifying in another part of the illustration.

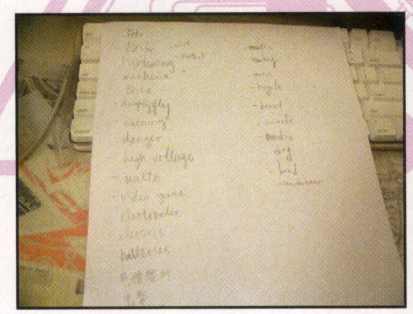


1 Before doing anything in *Illustrator* you need to come up with a theme for your T-shirt or, if you're creating it for a client, identify the message they want to promote. Here, our theme is to design a T-shirt that speaks for games developer High Voltage Software.



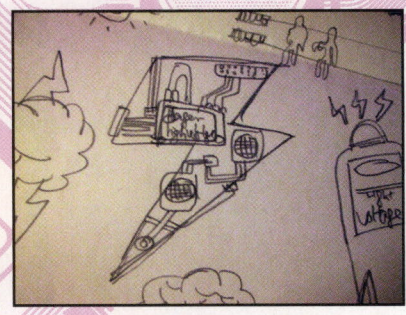
2 You need to familiarise yourself with the nature, corporate image and distinctiveness of your client's business before any creative work can take place. The company website is usually a good place to begin your research.

3 High Voltage Software is a software developer that produces mainly action games. The company presents a tough, powerful and energetic image, consistent with its name. Once you know the unique features of the company, you can start thinking about the elements associated with it and make a list of them.

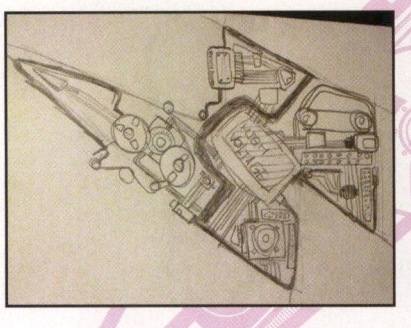


4 Your creativity will be severely restricted if you only use creative elements that are linked closely to the theme. Elements with less-direct associations can sometimes spark off interesting ideas. Incorporating your own favourite elements also helps to establish your personal style.

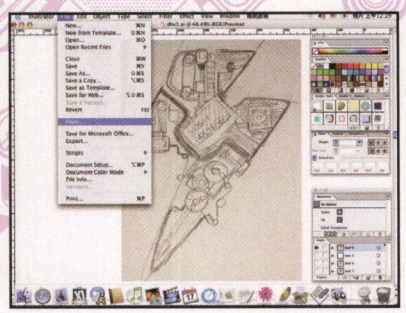
5 Play around with different elements by trying out combinations and doing some sketching on paper. Here, we try out two ways to link the elements. First, we focus on the image and nature of High Voltage, by using a lightning flash and computer products. Then we try using less vivid elements, such as music and animals.



6 Having done your preparation, you can select those elements from the sketches that best fit the corporate image. We've chosen the idea 'Blitz' because the simple flash outline matches the tough, powerful and energetic image of the software company. The multi-part design inside the flash also reflects the complex nature of design software.



7 After selecting the design you want to develop, continue to work on modifying the idea and enriching it through other elements. A dazzling computer game always comes with fantastic graphic and matching audio effect, so we've tried to include some musical elements (which are less associated with the theme) for experimental purposes.



8 Now you can scan your sketch and paste the draft image into *Illustrator*. This can be used as a reference when compositing the print. But this step is not necessary for everybody; it depends how you prefer to work.

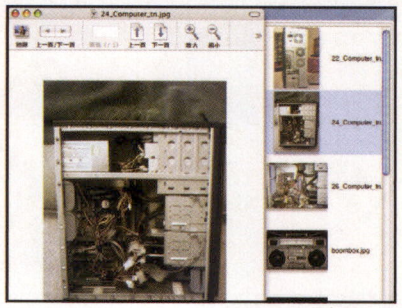
9 The design is composed of various mechanical parts, but some of them are less familiar sights than others. Instead of creating these from your imagination, you can gather all sorts of useful information from the internet.

Part 2: Production

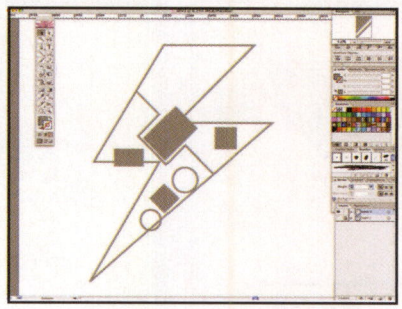
How to use Adobe *Illustrator* to combine complex structures...

Spot colours

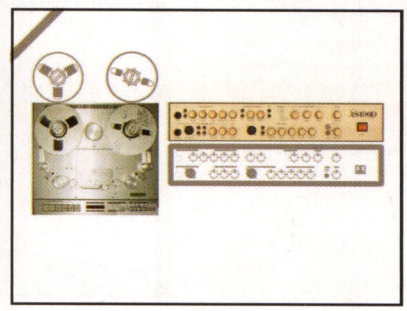
Printing on a T-shirt is different from printing on paper. This illustration uses two colour, both of which you have to change to spot colour for output.



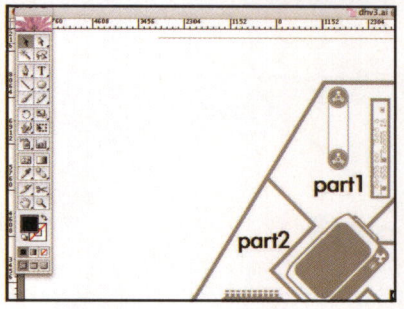
1 Your internet searches should be concentrated on front-view pictures of mechanical objects. Having searched the web and organised all the relevant material you need for your design, you're now ready for production.



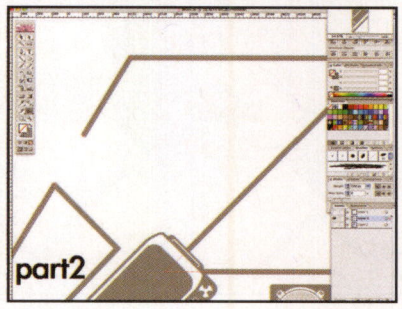
2 Open Adobe *Illustrator* to start work on your composition. First, select the Pen tool to outline the rough flash sign. The sign should be ten inches long – approximately the same size as the finished graphic will be on the T-shirt. Separate the sign into four main parts with lines which will eventually look like electric wire.



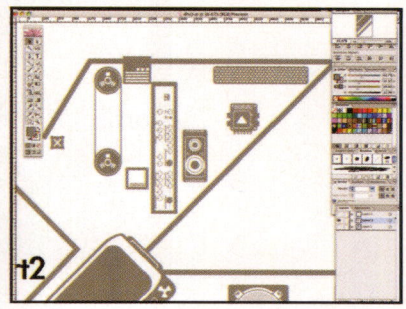
3 Position the screen in the centre of your flash sign, and place the speaker, generator and other objects wherever you like. Then place the research material in the blank area of the file and add some colour. We'll use only a single colour here because the structure itself is relatively complex. Too much colour might confuse things.



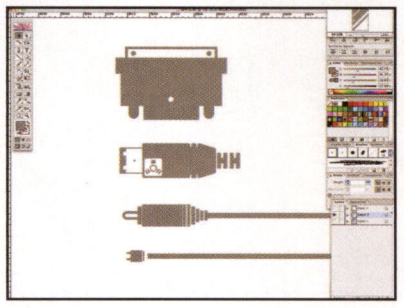
4 Put the finished elements into position in part 1 of the illustration. Then the rest of the lightning flash sign can be drawn in detail.



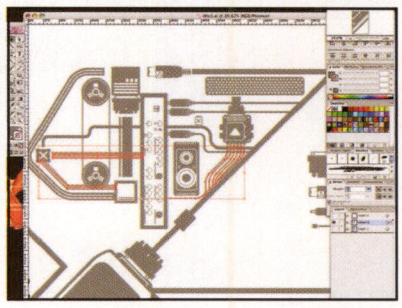
5 In part 1 of the composition, cut the outline slightly on the left to avoid things looking too neat and to reflect the complicated nature of mechanical objects.



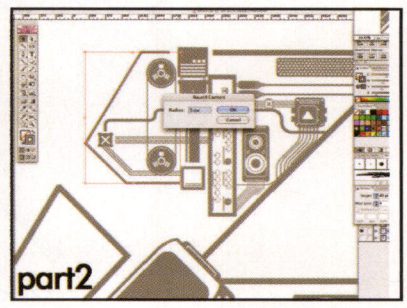
6 Add some other mechanical parts (for example, mini generator, speaker, ventilation slot, and any other appropriate elements) in this top portion of the image. Don't place the mechanical parts too close together because some space should be reserved for the electric wire connection later on.



7 Our image represents a mega electric generator that's composed of computer and music parts, so before connecting the mechanical parts with electric wires, images of different kinds of socket and plugs, such as USB and FireWire, should be sourced. You only need simple illustrations of these because little detail is needed.



8 Once you've finished drawing the sockets and plugs, you can start working on the wire. To create the layering effect of the electric wire, first draw a thick main wire, then draw some fine wires.



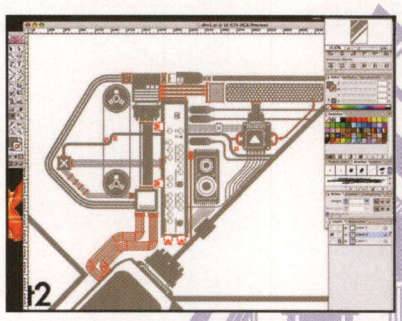
9 Adobe *Illustrator* has two handy functions for drawing curved and round corners, and they can be used when drawing electric wire. Select Filter> Stylise>Round Corners, to simulate the curvature of the wire. To draw a wire of identical length with round corners, select Object>Path>Offsetpath.

Part 3: Connecting wire

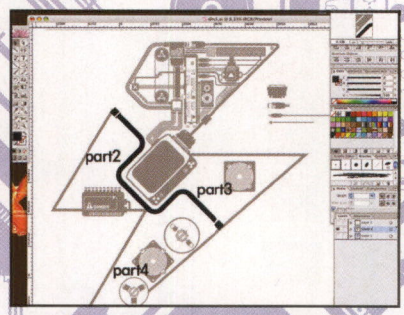
Connect all the parts of the illustration together with different weights of wire...

Curved corners

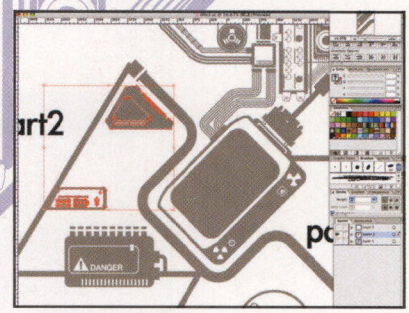
Illustrator's curves and round corner functions are useful for creating images of wires. Go to Filter>Stylise>Round Corners for drawing curved wires, and Object>Path>Offsetpath for drawing wire of identical length with round corners.



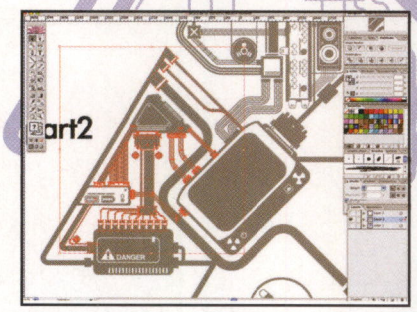
1 Part 1 (the top part) of the image is now largely finished. All that remains is to add some screws, wire joint and connection with the main wire. It's best to have the curvature of the wires standardised to horizontal, 90- or 45-degree angles for a consistent feel of the overall image.



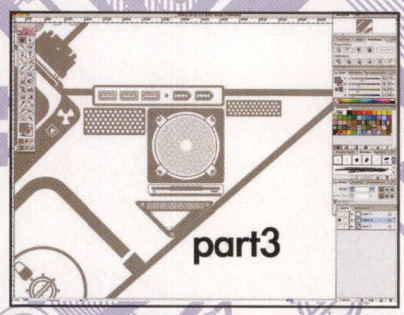
2 As you can see, there is a main wire that crosses through from part 2 to part 3. This is the most important wire in the whole image, so make it the thickest of all.



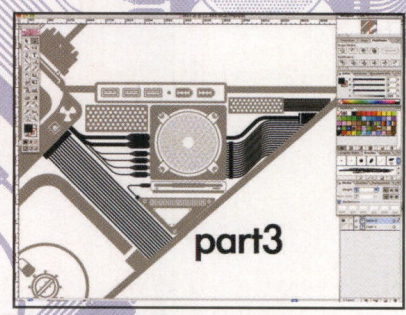
3 As with the top part of the image, add a triangular mechanical part and a common computer plug-in slot to part 2. The triangular part is originated from the mechanic design of Japanese animation Gundum while the computer plug-in slot is referenced from an Apple G5 computer.



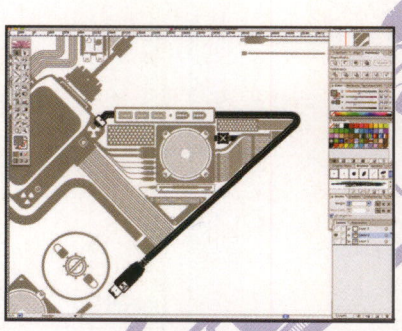
4 As with part 1, connect parts 2, 3 and 4 together with the wire, but note the different thickness of wires. Then add the plug and joint of the wire as well as screws and other minor parts to finish off part 2.



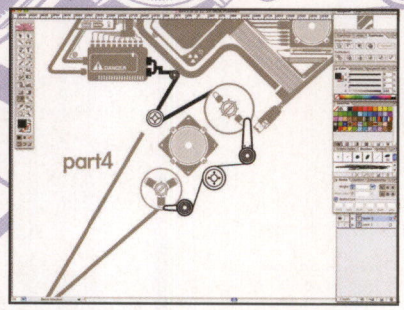
5 In part 3 of the image, include two different size ventilation ports, a pack of sockets, a disk drive and a triangular mechanic part. Be mindful of the space between the elements. Also note that the socket pack should be placed through the boundary of the flash sign.



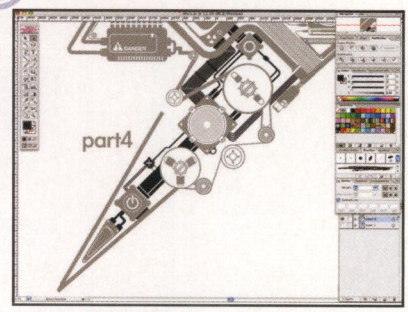
6 Start the connection after placing the above objects. In addition to the various thicknesses, wires should also be arranged with different degrees of tightness for an artistic illustration.



7 As we've already said, the overall design consists of four parts, and you need to connect all these parts together graphically. So adjust the outside wire to make it cross through to part 4 and then add a USB plug at the end of the wire to finish part 3.



8 Other than the speaker, the key element in part 4 (the bottom portion of the lightning flash) is the magnetic tape machine in motion, inspired by a conventional tape recorder. This element gives impact to the overall print and brings it to life.

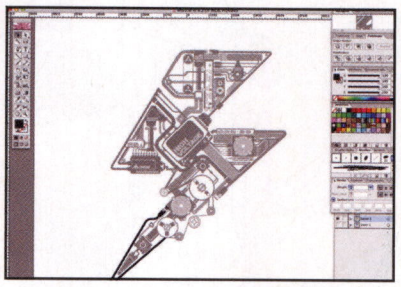


9 In the same way as has been done in parts 1, 2 and 3, you need to add some elements in part 4 and connect them to the three other parts. Balance out this portion of the illustration with the other parts you've already worked on.

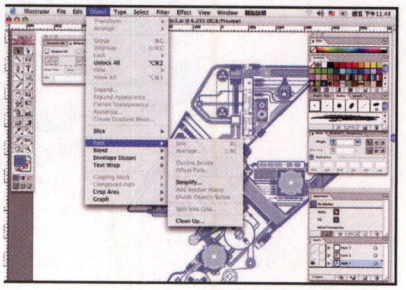
Connecting wire continued...

Outlining lines

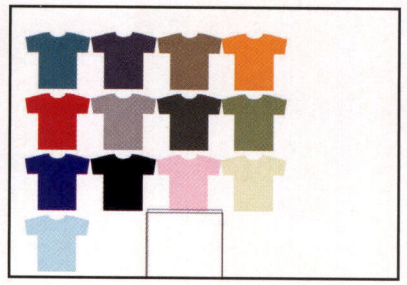
After finishing the artwork, you should outline all lines to path so that the 'Select same fill colour' function can be used to change the colour of all the lines at the same time.



10 Next, adjust the wire below the flash sign and connect it to the speaker. Finally, add some lines that lead to 'HIGH VOLTAGE' to intensify the impression of danger.



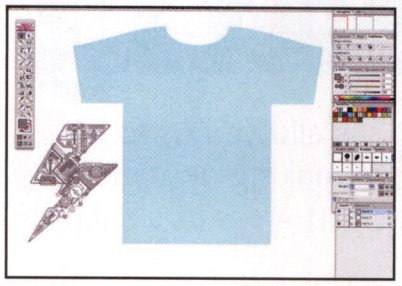
11 Once the illustration is finished, clean up the stray points, unpainted objects and empty text paths by selecting Object>Path>Clean up. This clean-up function can avoid problems when outputting the print.



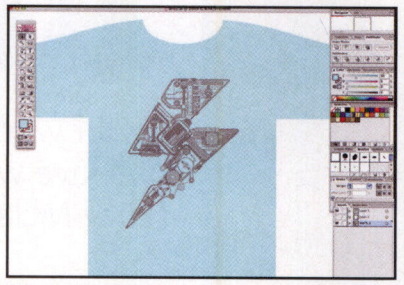
12 Once the image has been cleaned up, you need to think about preparing your T-shirt in different colours. For this project we've chosen light blue, red, black and grey for trial.

Part 4: Ready to print

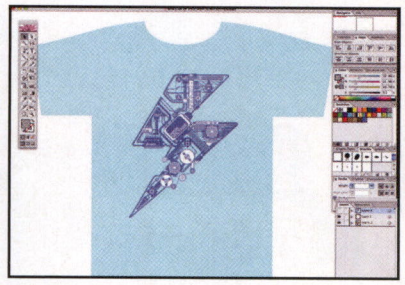
The final steps to creating a print-ready T-shirt design...



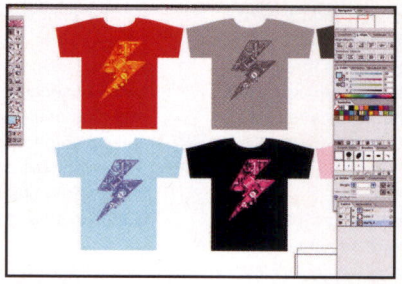
1 You now have to decide how big we want the illustration to be printed on the T-shirt. Because of the complex nature of the design, the fine wires might be blurred if it's printed too small, so we've chosen a large print size.



2 After confirming the size, you need to select the position of the graphic on the T-shirt. Given the large size of the print, the best position for it is in the centre of the T-shirt. This gives a better sense of balance.

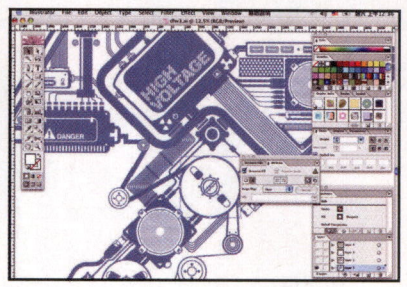


3 The first colour combination we tried was a light blue T-shirt with darker blue as the core colour. Unfortunately, using a single colour alone doesn't fulfil the required layering effect so we splashed white onto the key parts to enhance the layers.



4 We then experimented with three other colour combinations: yellow on dark red, pink on black to intensify the contrast and dark grey on light grey for a subtle effect. Contrasting and tone-on-tone are two kinds of colour-matching technique, both of which can prove effective.

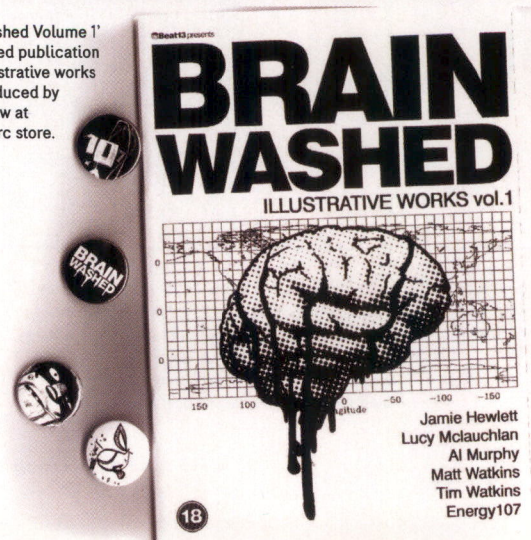
5 Finally we picked the original blue-and-dark-blue combination because the colour tone was more natural. Our illustration is now ready to be printed on a T-shirt.



6 The last thing to do is to select all the white fill colour and tick the 'Overprint fill' box from the Attributes panel. When printing the image onto a T-shirt, the blue colour will be printed before the white colour, so the white colour needs to be overprinted to achieve the best results. ca-p

Left: BrumPeeps
Below: West
"Beat13 works because we generate as much work for ourselves as we get offered from other people," explains Lucy Mclauchlan. These images, BrumPeeps and West, are a good example of this process of exploration.

Right: 'Brainwashed Volume 1' comic book-sized publication of collected illustrative works from 2004. Produced by Beat13 for a show at Manchester's Arc store.



Profile:

Beat13

"Our work has allowed us to travel, doing the thing we love while making new friends along the way," Lucy Mclauchlan gives us a snapshot of Beat13.

Lucy Mclauchlan and Matt Watkins started Beat13 in 1999 as an outlet for their creative imaginings, spurred on by the hope that if you show your work to such a huge audience 'Something's gotta happen'.

Several years later their mix of hand-drawn and digital elements has found favour with the brands that keep an ear close to the ground: Kangol, Maharishi and Carhartt.

A widely collaborative affair, Beat13 conjures up exciting projects through an interchange of ideas: "As fresh perceptions and new ideas are shared between artists."

How it began

Lucy opens the story in the pre-millennial Midlands: "Matt coined the phrase Beat13 to describe a group of creatively inspired friends and associates hailing from Birmingham." Things weren't really going according to plan in the nation's second city: "While unemployed and facing limited opportunities in a creative backwater, many a pipe dream was discussed."

Things started to move when, in 1999, Matt "fell into the emerging web industry." The artist quickly learnt enough to turn Beat13 into a website, which, says Lucy, "Was designed simply to offer a platform for creative works of inspiration."

The potential was obvious and in 2001 Matt and Lucy were "spearheading" Beat13's first real-world art exhibition.

That exhibition, at London's Horse Hospital, was only the first time Beat13 escaped from the confines of the world wide web. Subsequent ventures have included vehicular makeovers, bust enhancements and pavement decoration for a range of interested parties. The whole thing seems to hinge on maintaining tangible links with the worlds of art and graffiti.

Join in

"The Beat13 concept works," says Lucy, "because rather than looking at short-term gains, the project operates like a garden planting seeds." There's also a conscious effort to keep the creative juices flowing:

Right: Beat13 website homepage. As a website, Lucy says Beat13 was designed simply to offer a platform for creative works of inspiration. The Beat13 homepage and T-shirt design sets the mood for the entire venture; it's about art, music and life.

Middle: This cheeky piece of work was the promo artwork for Supersonic, the Birmingham music festival curated by Capsule in 2004. Beat13 is a collaborative outfit well suited to this type of job. Lucy says she hopes its attitude "encourages others to join in with the fun and games we have."

Bottom: Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, decorated by Matt and Lucy for Story of Kangol exhibition in August 2004.

"We generate as much work for ourselves as we get offered from other people." This, according to Lucy, "forms a healthy creative balance."

The self-motivated pieces in particular have helped Beat13 to grow, explains Lucy: "The collaborative projects we've hosted basically encourage others to join in with the fun and games." In this way the network of artists and collaborators continues to grow, helping to make the 'creative backwater' effect Matt and Lucy experienced a thing of the past.

The final jigsaw piece fell into place when, in 2003, the Beat13 Gallery opened. "Things naturally progressed from the online Beat13 space to a physical gallery," explains Lucy. Based in Birmingham's fashionable Custard Factory, Lucy says the gallery acts as an outlet for, "Limited edition art, clothes and other bits & bobs by local and international artists."

Though Beat13 as a whole casts a longer shadow, Lucy and Matt are the core contributors. Lucy's work is very much hands-on: "Essentially, it's mark making." Matt's approach is "far more considered." Combining these two styles gives the resulting body of work an interestingly cross-media appeal.

Beat13 images are extremely open, inviting the viewer to examine them closely; the artists are very present in their work. Emerging in the midst of the digital illustration boom, very clearly part of the 'post-Mac generation', Lucy cultured her use of marker pens: "To allow myself less restriction on my choice of surfaces and places to mark."

Not completely ignoring the benefits of the computer, Lucy attempts to encompass both analog and digital realms in her work. This means a greater range of expression as, says Lucy, "The recognisable marker penned images can sit happily in many different situations."

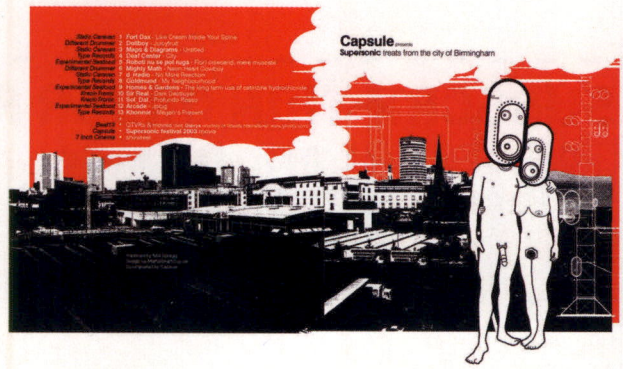
When 'tits up' is good

Beat13 continues to attract some interesting commissions. "One of our favourite jobs," begins Lucy, "was for last year's 'Keep a Breast' event." Sounds intriguing. She goes on: "Plaster-cast breast moulds were made and then customised by some of the best artists from around the world."

Last year the event, devised as a fundraiser for breast cancer, ran alongside the Female World Surf Championship in Anglet, Southern France. "We were invited, along with Will Barras & Galo, to spend the week customising the fresh moulds."

In case that wasn't clear, Lucy recaps the situation for us: "So, along with two local artists, the six of us got to work and spent the week on a beach painting surfer moulds." The moulds then joined the exhibition of pre-customised moulds returned by artists from across the globe. With some satisfaction Lucy concludes: "A huge amount of money was raised, it was a week never to be forgotten." Beat13 are now safely back in Birmingham. ca-p

To see more of Beat13's work, see
[w] www.beat13.co.uk
[w] www.keep-a-breast.org
[w] www.modart.com



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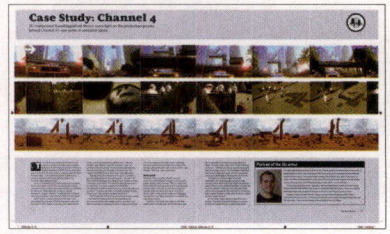

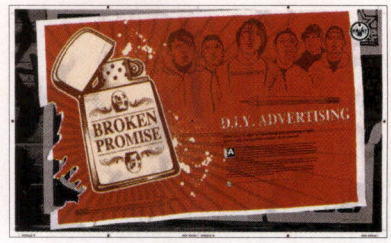

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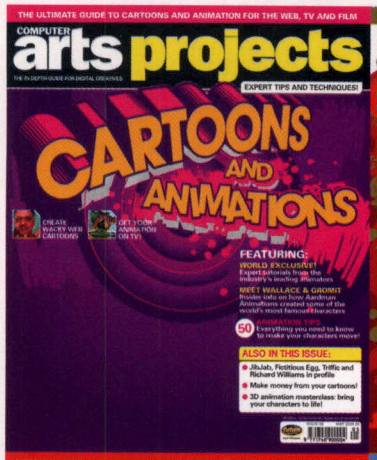
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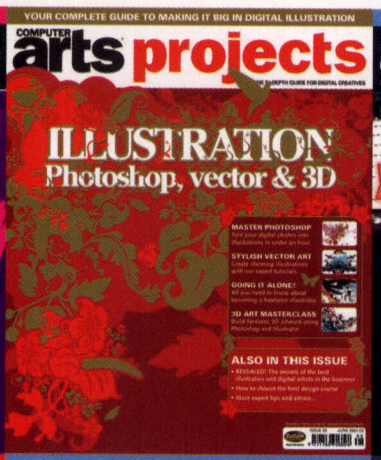
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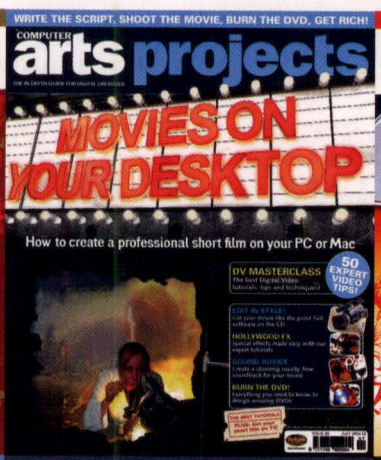
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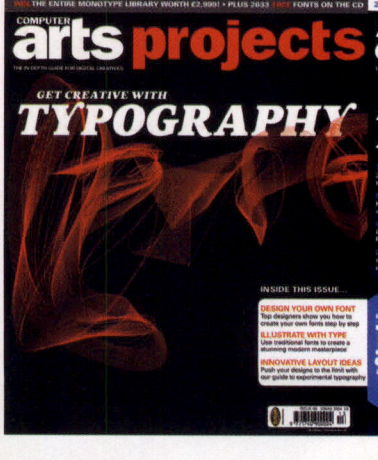
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Feature:
The agent agenda

Whether or not to team up with an agency is a tough decision at any point in an illustrator's career. We talk to the industry about this hotly debated topic...

As a freelance illustrator, going it alone can be tough. Not only does your intensely creative artwork need to have a commercial value for your clients, you need to have a handle on financial and business issues, not to mention self-promotion and problem-solving. Plus there's all those deadlines in-between. How do illustrators do it?

For those blessed with a creative talent as well as the gift of the gab and good business sense, they enjoy success and reap the full financial benefit of every job (except the tax bit, of course). Creative-types with absolutely no handle on financial planning or self-promotion, however, might seek the assistance and professionalism of an agent. But for the large majority, who fall somewhere in-between these two poles, choosing between a solo career and the support of an illustration agency is a tough decision. We've spoken to five people, whose varying experience you may find useful in helping you make that all-important choice.

The illustrator with an agent

Allan Sanders began his career in computer programming, but a change of heart, an art degree and an experience with an Apple Mac led him to become a full-time illustrator. Much of Allan's work is editorial because his friendly style suits a wide audience. Like many, his break into the industry took a lot of time and hard work.

"I was lucky to get a few editorial jobs as soon as I left college. It helped me find my feet," says Allan. His first couple of years as an illustrator were spent trying to meet new clients: "I was pounding the pavements with my portfolio, finding contacts in different ways – browsing magazines, going through the *Artists and Writers Yearbook*, sending out postcards and following contacts from other clients."

After two years of serious effort, he decided to look into getting an agent. Allan explains: "I was at a point where I felt confident I could handle more commissions if I could spend more time in the studio and less darting around London with my portfolio. I approached a number of agencies and chose Heart based on the other artists they represented. I liked their set-up and position in the industry."

One valuable piece of advice is that signing up to an agency doesn't mean commissions from day one. "It took about five or six months to really get going. They kept in touch regularly and since that bedding-in time I've had a pretty regular flow of work," he says.

Allan keeps in touch with the Heart agency mainly by phone and email, but they meet up once a year to discuss progress and promotional activity. He continues to get work from clients he had before joining Heart, but is careful to balance the two sources. "I try not to say no to my agent too often. They're after all in the business of representing you and if you're too busy with your own work, it doesn't make a good relationship."

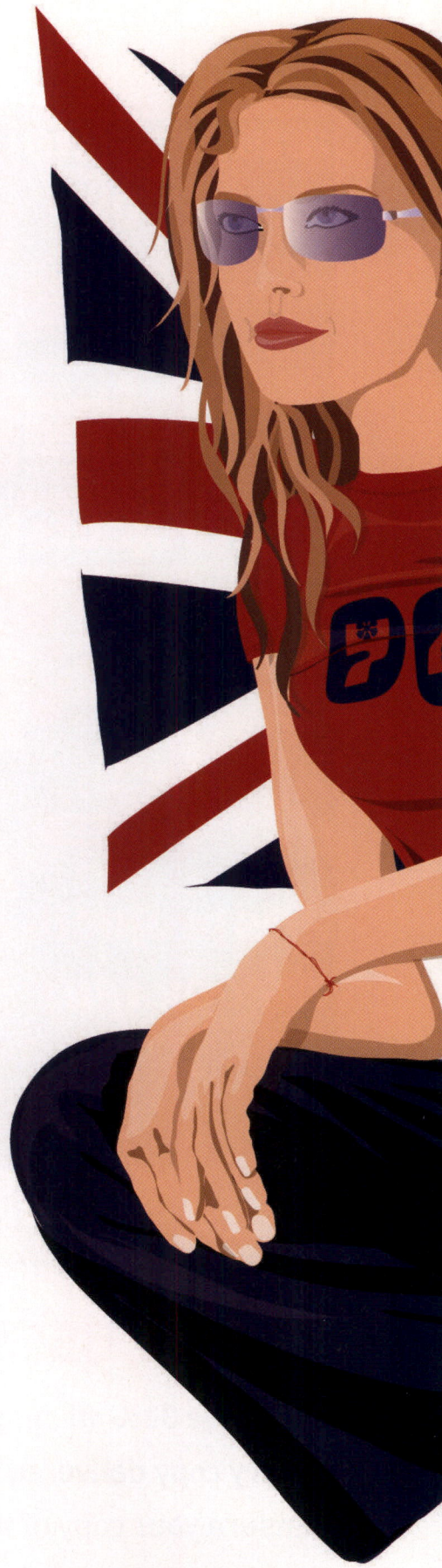
Based on Allan's experience, an agency suits him well. Their cut of his fees is outbalanced by the increase in effort and time he is able to put into his illustration work.

The illustrator without an agent

Towards the other end of the scale, Paul Bateman has worked with five different agents since his career began 17 years ago but he's now gone solo. His collage-style artwork has been commissioned by editorial, design and advertising clients. "Even though I've had over 1,000 illustrations published, I still get a buzz when the phone rings with a new job!"

Paul sought out an agent after a year of full-time illustrating. "I think I was expecting too much too soon and that experience was short-lived. I worked with another small agent whom I was happy with for a few years, but she left the industry." In subsequent years he was signed to three larger agencies, one of which also closed. "My experience is very varied but I preferred the smaller agencies as you feel much more part of the team."

These days, Paul relies on himself to generate his success. "Times have changed and self-promotion is much easier for an individual. Your website is available all around the world 24-7; you can print your own high quality mailshots and take out pages in source books. You should really ask yourself if you need an agent." >



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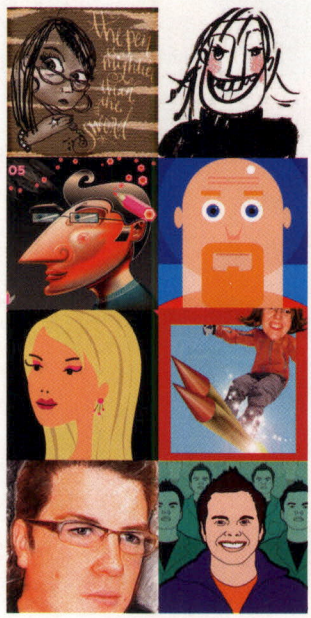


Eight illustrators make up artists' collective 741 Illustration ([w] www.741illustration.com). This work by Jacquie O'Neill started as a self-promotion piece but has been used by Fuji Hunt to advertise paper and exhibitions.

The agencies

Here are just a handful of UK agencies currently representing hundreds of illustrators here and abroad.

Advocate
372 Old York Road, London, SW18 1SP
[t] 020 8877 0072
[e] mail@advocate-art.com
[w] www.advocate-art.com

Arena
108 Leonard Street, London, EC2A 4RH
[t] 020 7613 4040
[e] info@arenaworks.com
[w] www.arenaworks.com

Artworks
70 Rosaline Road, London, SW6 7QT
[t] 020 7610 1801
[e] info@theartworksinc.com
[w] www.theartworksinc.com

Central Illustration Agency
36 Wellington Street, Covent Garden, London. WC2E 7BD
[t] 020 7240 8925
[e] info@centralillustration.com
[w] www.centralillustration.com

Debut Art
30 Tottenham Street, London, UK W1T 4RJ
[t] 020 7636 1064
[e] debutart@coningsbygallery.demon.co.uk
[w] www.debutart.com

Heart
100 De Beauvoir Road, London, N1 4EN
[t] 020 7254 5558
[e] info@heartagency.com
[w] www.heartagency.com

Illustration Ltd
2 Brooks Court, Cringle Street, London, SW8 5BX
[t] 020 7720 5202
[e] team@illustrationweb.com
[w] www.illustrationweb.com

Inkshed
99 Chase Side, Null, EN2 6NL
[t] 020 8367 4545
[e] makecontact@inkshed.co.uk
[w] www.inkshed.co.uk

The Organisation
69 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London
[t] 020 7833 8268
[e] organise@easynet.co.uk
[w] www.organisart.co.uk

Paul continues: "I would advise a new illustrator to gain experience of dealing with briefs and clients professionally, getting first-hand responses and building up contacts. Don't view an agent as the solution to everything but as just another weapon in your commission-generating arsenal."

The agency

Advocate is a growing agency which began as an artists' collective. Similar to many agencies, it takes 25-35 per cent of the fees for each commission. Five agents now represent 40 artists in a wide range of styles. "We aim to represent original image-makers from fine art painters to 3D artists," says Luke Wilson, one of Advocate's agents.

According to Luke the main benefit of having an agent is to increase workflow. "Agents have excellent data sources which enable artists' work to be shown to clients who are harder to track down or approach as a freelance illustrator."

Advocate has regular contact with its artists about promotion and other aspects of their work. It also holds monthly artist days where new or existing artists have one-on-one time with the agents. "A good agent creates a safe and secure environment for their artists to work in," begins Luke. "Making sure the best effort is made to obtain regular commissions from reputable companies. Good agents also provide relevant services if an artist faces a difficult situation so they have someone fighting their corner and don't feel alone. I can't see any disadvantages in having an agent."

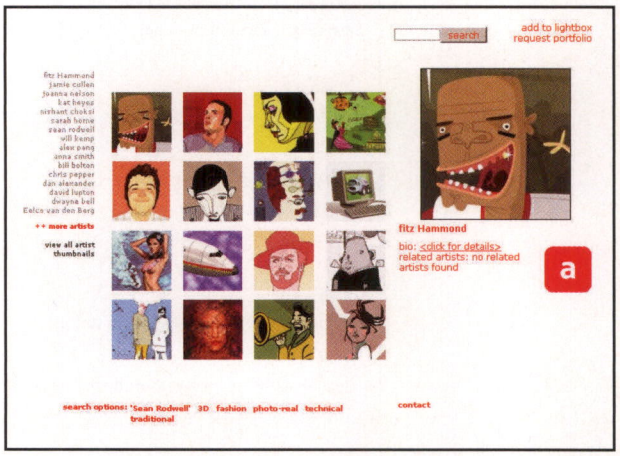
The industry regulators

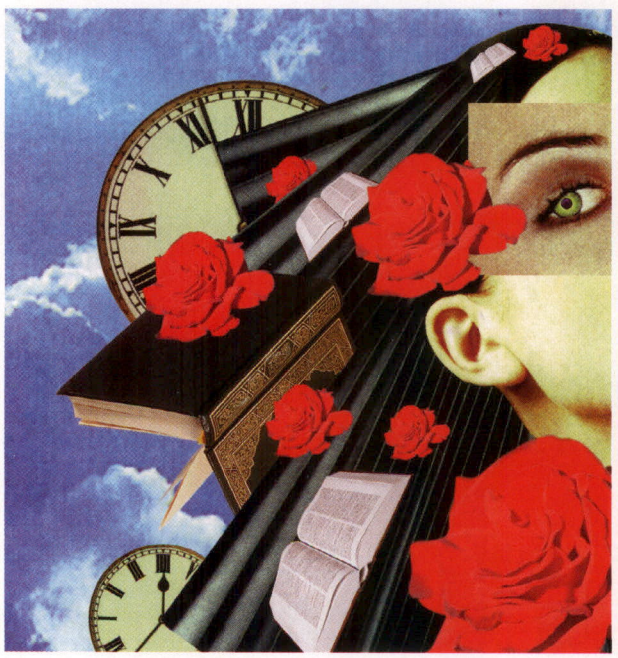
There are two organisations that keep track of the artist-agent relationship in the industry. The AOI (Association of Illustrators) and the SAA (Society of Artists Agents) may represent different sides of the coin, but share an agent code of conduct to which members are expected to adhere.

The AOI doesn't actively recommend or discourage its members in seeking agency representation and can only help with problems in an advisory capacity. "We try to cover the pros and cons, as there are more illustrators wishing to be represented than

Below: The Advocate agency represents 40 artists in a wide range of styles. Its website at [w] www.advocate-art.com showcases each illustrator's work.

Bottom: Freelance illustrator Paul Bateman's collage-style work is suited to a range of editorial commissions. See his portfolio at [w] www.paulbateman.co.uk.





Allan Sanders (left), represented by the Heart agency, created this piece on summer house-sharing for Jungle Magazine. See Allan's portfolio at [w] www.loopland.net.

agencies able to take them on," says AOI Membership Officer, Derek Brazell. "We give advice on how to approach agents and questions they should ask such as how transparent the agency is with paperwork for fees, commissions and promotional expenses." They also recommend a new illustrator spending time developing a professional portfolio and client contacts before approaching an agency.

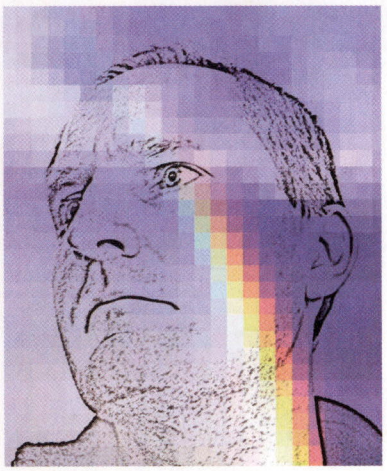
The artist collective

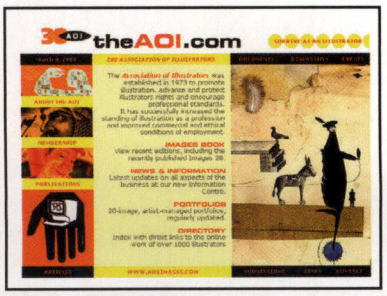
Some illustrators choose to forgo the agent and set up a collective where a handful of artists work together and share experiences while managing their individual affairs. 741 Illustration is such a collective. "It allows us total control of how we present ourselves professionally to the market place; we are able to plan our marketing strategy and working practice to our own agenda," explains founder member Jacquie O'Neill. All promotional costs are divided equally and five per cent of all commission goes towards maintaining the business. "An illustrator is usually a 'lone wolf', but a collective gives the artist a feeling of camaraderie and security. The energy from this team spirit is both inspiring and supportive."

A handful of the illustrators at 741 have had previous experience of agents and offer some advice when approaching an agency. "Recognise that you are setting up a business – ask relevant questions and even make some demands. Don't sign any restrictive agreements where the agent represents you totally. Keep some aspect of the promotion of your work exclusively for yourself so you're not solely reliant on the agent for income."

But for this successful collective, agent days are over. "The collaboration of each illustrator's extended skills, from web design, PR, tech head, art-worker and copywriter is a powerful and successful combination."

The options aren't endless but they are available and worth the research. But once you've made a decision to join an agent, start a collective or go solo, your career isn't set in stone. Be honest with yourself about your business skills and research a number of agencies by talking to them, looking at their website and even contacting its illustrators before you make that decision. ca-p





Top: Paul Bateman. Above: The Association of Illustrators started up 22 years ago to represent artists rights and encourage professional standards. See their website at [w] www.theaoi.com for advice and member gallery. Left: Derek Brazell of the AOI.

Back to basics

Whether or not to sign up to an agency isn't a straightforward decision. Here are just some of the pros and cons you should consider before making your decision...

Benefits:

- An established agency has a profile or reputation within the industry as well as a huge contact book. Your work will be seen by far more people than you are able to contact, especially at the beginning.
- Their experience means they can advise you honestly on your portfolio and client work.
- They can advertise more than one illustrator at once, which works out cheaper than conducting your own promotional activities. Some agencies have gallery spaces and host exhibitions too.
- As a new illustrator, being on the books alongside many established illustrators can enhance your professional status.
- They are often able to source new types of work for you in different areas of the industry.
- An agency will negotiate fees, discuss contracts, send invoices and chase payments. They are therefore useful for less confident or less business-minded illustrators.
- They can be the middle man in discussing the occasional difficult issue such as artwork changes or deadlines with clients.
- If an agent has an overseas office, they are far more able to show your work overseas and maintain closer contact with clients rather than rely on email.

Disadvantages:

- Agencies will take a cut of between 15–35 per cent of every commission. You may also be required to contribute towards their promotional expenses.
- It can take between six months to a year for an agency to source a decent amount of work for you as they build up your industry profile.
- If you want to change your style of illustration, you need to at least warn the agency, if not discuss in-depth how it could effect your offers of work.
- Some agents will insist all client work goes through them, even work that is gained independently of the agency.
- If you're used to doing everything yourself, it can be difficult to relinquish control over your income, self promotion and client interaction.
- An agent will decide who to put forward for a particular commission. You need to be able to trust that they will represent each artist equally and not favour certain illustrators.
- There is no limit to how many illustrators an agency takes on, so bear in mind that large numbers can effect how much work is put into promoting you. A good agency will of course stick to a manageable amount.

Photorealistic illustrations in Flash

Flash's artistic drawing tools are known for their simplicity yet amazing results. Discover new techniques to achieve realistic shines and glares...

Almost any object can be illustrated realistically with *Flash's* vector drawing tools. However, the more organic-looking your object is, the higher the odds that it might not be possible. Having said that, even organic objects, such as this beetle, can be given a mechanical feel with layering gradients – the bumpy texture on its legs and back is created with simple oval graphics. All you need to do is visually analyse the object you wish to illustrate; whether it be an insect or an item on your desk, you'll find that a lot is possible simply by using drawing techniques in *Flash*.

Some basic knowledge of *Flash's* drawing tools and colour panels will be a bonus when completing this tutorial, and you can become a more efficient user of *Flash* if you learn and customise your keyboard shortcuts. Also, using a drawing tablet and stylus pen will give you more control over the vectors that you'll be plotting and manipulating. If you wish to follow this tutorial to the letter, we recommend you open the source file found on the cover CD.

Expertise and illustration provided by Robert Firebaugh, Co-Founder of Electrotank Inc., an online *Flash* gaming company. Robert is also the Founder of *Flash* graphics resource site Vectorkid, **[w]** www.vectorkid.com.

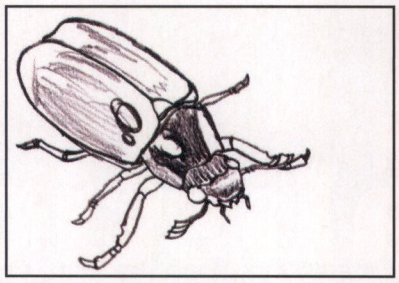
The finished .fla file can be found on the *Computer Arts Projects* CD70 in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Flash folder.

Part 1: Finding your inspiration

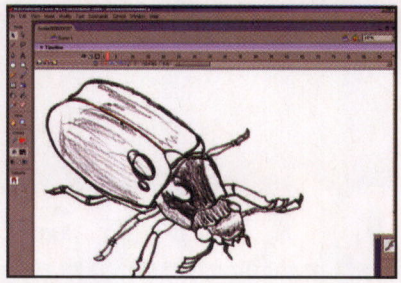
The first thing to do is create a line drawing you can start working from...

Snap to Objects

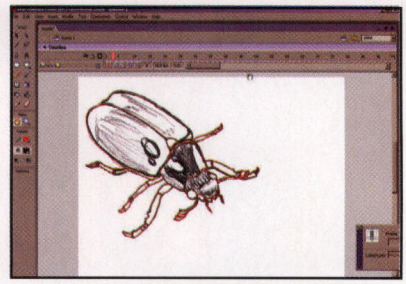
While creating new lines and connecting them together, experiment with having the 'Snap to Objects' feature on or off. This snaps a newly created graphic to another for precise positioning. It comes in handy when you create a new line and want it to start where the last line ended or you want to position a graphic to a certain point, but you won't always want this feature switched on. For example, you'll switch it off when you want to have the flexibility to place a graphic anywhere or in a tight place next to other graphics.



1 Before you start work in *Flash*, get inspired about what you're going to draw. Taking photos of your object will also help you get the right colours and proportions. If you have a sketch or photo of the object that you're satisfied with, scan the image and import it into *Flash* and store it on its own locked layer.



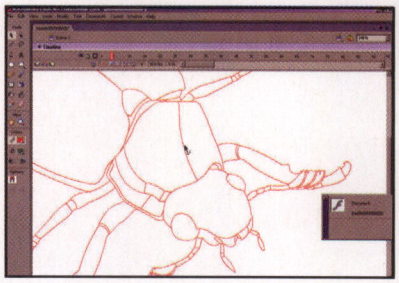
2 Start to trace your sketch with the Line tool, creating outlines where fills will be applied. Set your lines to hairline width and choose a bright colour that is easily noticeable. To create a curved line, first draw a straight line with the Line tool, switch to the Selection tool and click and drag the middle part of the line selecting the line curve.



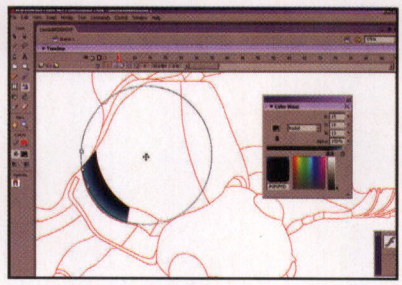
3 Once you've traced the contour of your object, feel free to go back and add detail where desired. The more detailed you draw your sketch, the less freehand drawing you have to do in *Flash*. The layer your sketch is on can be removed at this time or moved on the side for future reference.

Part 2: Creating an organic shape

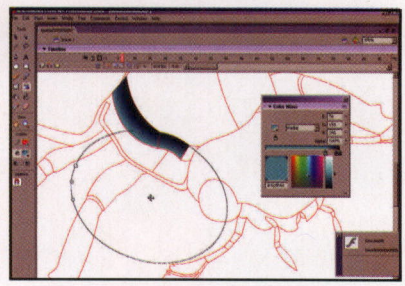
With your sketch complete, connect two radial gradients to achieve a dynamic shape...



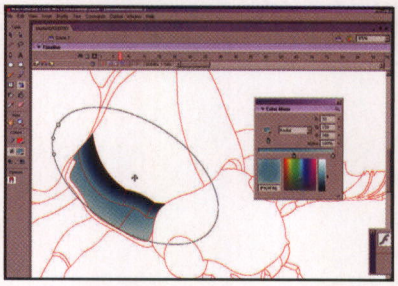
1 Use the Line tool to block off certain areas. This outlines areas where certain gradients will be applied. One thing to note is not to try and add a lot of detail right away. Make space for basic gradient fills which will define the object.



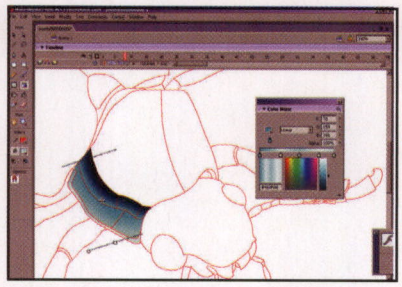
2 Before you can start colouring in-between the outlines you have to create the gradients with the Colour Mixer panel. This can be accessed under Window>Design Panels>Colour Mixer. Get to know how this panel works, especially the Fill Style dropdown and how to create a gradient with the gradient line and colour swatches.



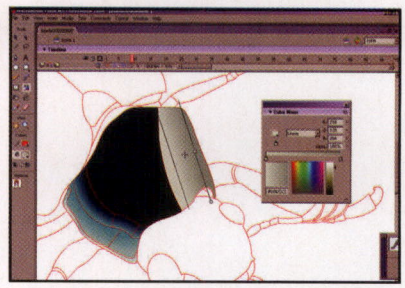
3 Apply the second radial gradient next to the first one. If your gradients aren't matching up correctly, adjust them with the Fill Transform tool. Make sure you're using the same colours in both gradients and that the colour swatches in the gradient line are in similar positions but opposite.



4 Use the similar technique of connecting radial gradients but use lighter shades of blue to give the impression that the colour is fading. As long as the same colour is used where different gradients meet, the connection should be seamless. Copy and paste the hex colour value for an exact match.



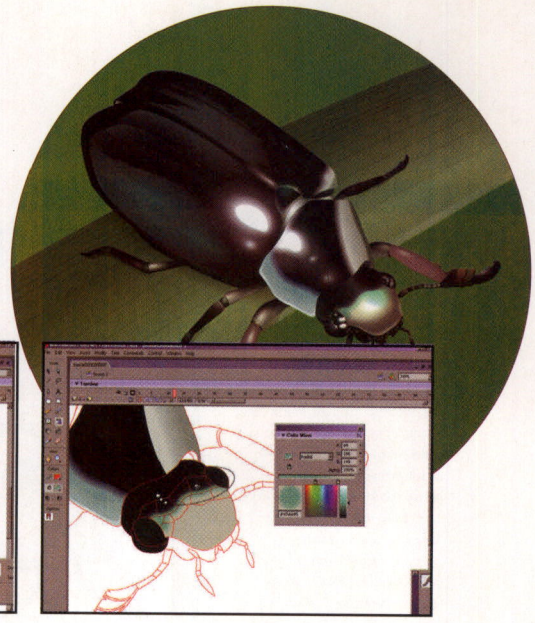
5 To give the illusion that the edge of the shell is shimmering, create a linear gradient with alternating light blue and slightly darker blue colours. Since the colours used in this gradient are similar yet slightly lighter than the previous gradients used, they tend to blend in.



6 On the top side, apply a grey linear gradient fill – this will add a slight depth to the shell. The more drastic the change from light to dark colour in your gradient, the stronger your highlight will appear. In the centre, apply a simple radial gradient using the dark blue in the lower radial gradients.

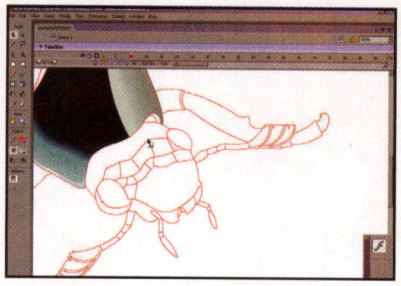
Part 3: Defining the beetle's head

Connect two rows of radial gradients to create the insect's head...

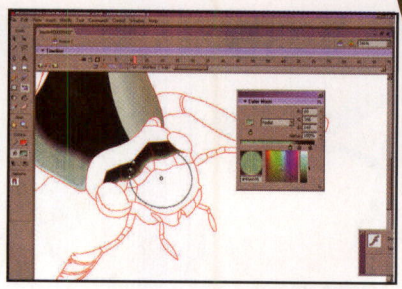


Plotting outlines

When plotting your lines, visualise how the radial gradients will connect and place dividing lines where they meet. The more complicated the shape you wish to replicate, the more dividing outlines you may need.



1 To define the basic shape of the head use the same gradient-connecting techniques, only this time you need to use a lot more of them to achieve tighter curves. Use the Line tool to create the outlines and use the Selection tool to manipulate the position of them.

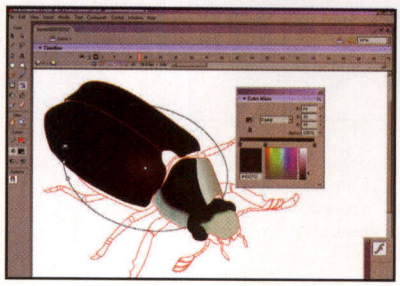


2 Once your outlines are laid out, use the Colour Mixer panel to create your gradients. Start to apply the radial gradients alternating them so the dark blue colour is on the outside then the inside, giving the wavy look. The closer you place your colour swatches next to each other, the tighter the gradient will be.

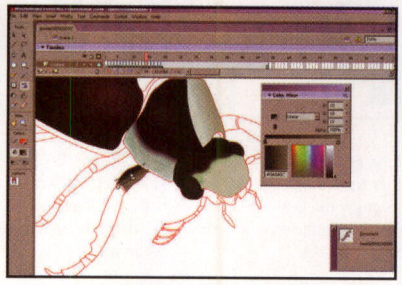
3 Create dark blue radial gradients that will serve as basic fills for the back of the head and eyes. Using two colours that are a slight shade apart can give a subtle look that can make all the difference in whether your object looks realistic or not.

Part 4: Applying colour to the body

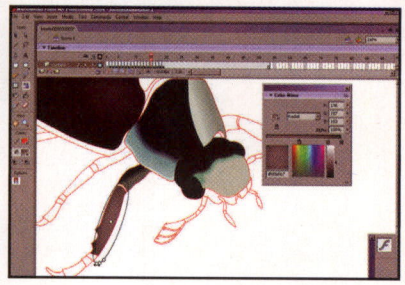
Radial gradients define the basic shape of the rest of the beetle's body...



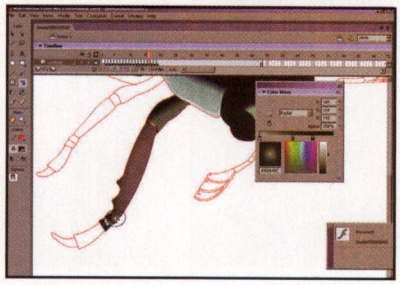
1 To colour the back part of the beetle, create a dark red radial gradient and apply it with your Paint Bucket tool. Once applied, use the Fill Transform tool to adjust it to the position shown.



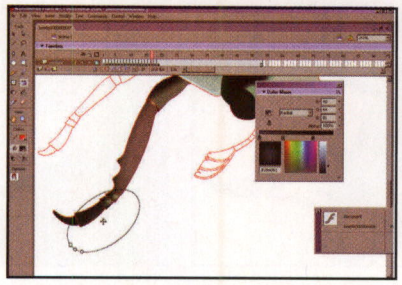
2 Create a linear gradient of pale blue-grey to dark blue and apply it to the upper part of the leg. To give the effect that light is being cast from below, position the lighter colour at the bottom.



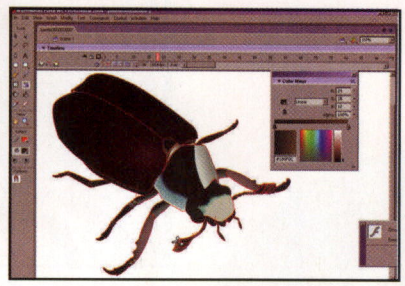
3 Create a pinkish-grey radial gradient with the Colour Mixer panel. Apply it with the Paint Bucket tool and position it with the Fill Transform tool. To match the shape of the outline, stretch out the scale handle.



4 Apply cream to dark green radial gradients to the leg joints. By adjusting the position of the colour swatches in the gradient line you can create different gradients with similar colours.



5 Use the Colour Mixer panel to create a dark blue radial gradient. To adjust an old gradient, just click on one of the colour swatches and adjust the target in the colour grid. To save the new gradient, click on the options icon in the upper-right corner of the panel and click Add Swatch.



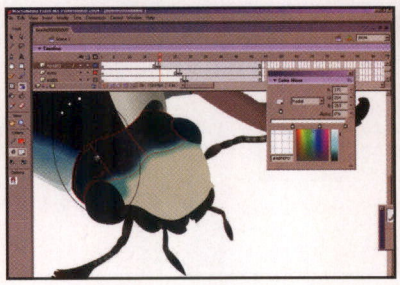
6 By applying similar looking gradients to the other legs you'll have the basic colour fills for the whole beetle finished. To select all your outlines at once, switch to your Selection tool and double-click on any part of the outlines. Use the quick key to delete the selected graphics.

Part 5: Adding highlights

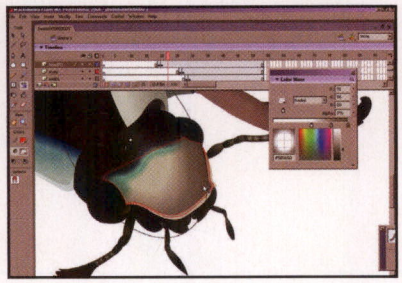
You can achieve some dynamic lighting effects by layering gradients...

Layers vs groups

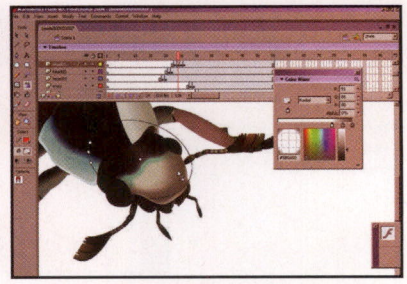
There are several ways you can separate your graphics, one of which is placing them on different layers. The other way is to select the graphics you want on top and making them a group by clicking Modify>Group. The only down side of making selected graphics a group is that to edit them you have to double-click on the group to go inside it.



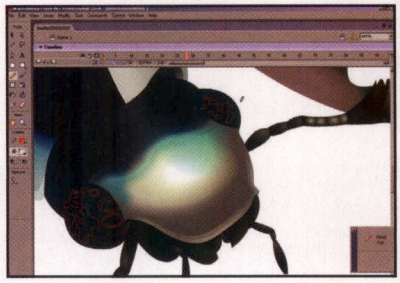
1 To add more detail you have to create a new layer on the timeline. Adding detail on a new layer ensures that previous graphics will not be manipulated. By using gradients with a certain percentage of alpha you'll be able to see through it. Zero per cent alpha is completely transparent and 100 per cent alpha is not transparent.



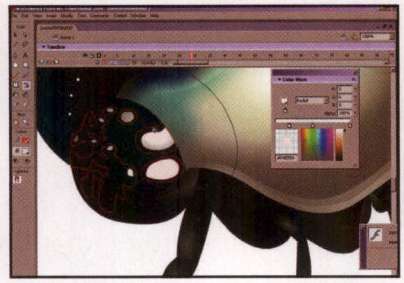
2 Layering gradients will give you a more complicated looking shape than if you were to use only one gradient. Layering gradients will, therefore, give you the odd shape you're looking for on the beetle's head.



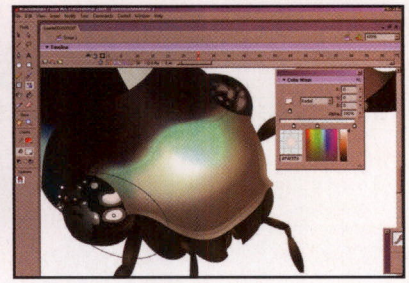
3 Reusing a radial gradient but repositioning the colour swatches on the gradient line will give you a sharper curve that lines up with the left eye. Use the Fill Transform tool to scale out the gradient so it spreads out to the edge of the head.



4 Create two radial alpha gradients, one cream coloured and the other teal, and position them in the centre to give a glowing look. Use the Pencil tool set to Smooth line and draw outlines where the highlights will be applied.



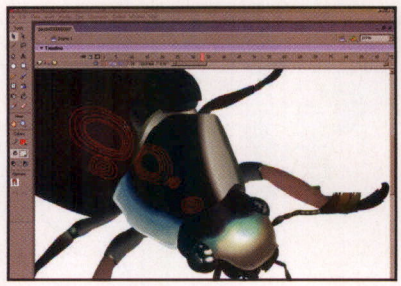
5 Use the Colour Mixer panel to create a new white/cream radial gradient and apply it with the Paint Bucket tool in the outlined areas. Solid fills of white with different intensities of alpha can be applied.



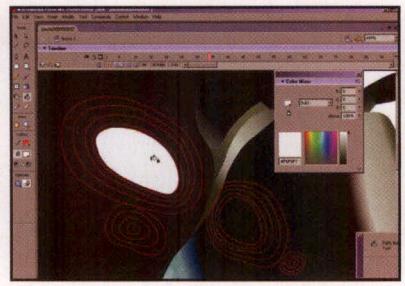
6 Create a radial white gradient using different levels of alpha and apply it with the Fill Transform tool. Notice how the more transparent side of the gradient pans outward adding depth. This makes the eye look spherical.

Part 6: Organic shaped glares

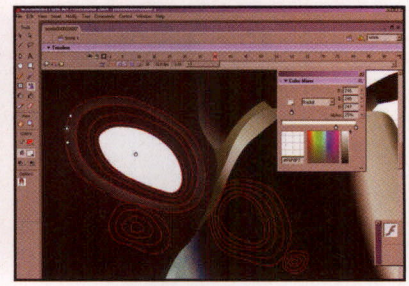
Connect multiple radial gradients to achieve shaped glares...



1 Use the Pencil tool to create a circle where you think the glare will start. Continue to draw more circles radiating outward, and feel free to make the contour of the circle organic in shape. To manipulate the contours further, use the Selection tool.

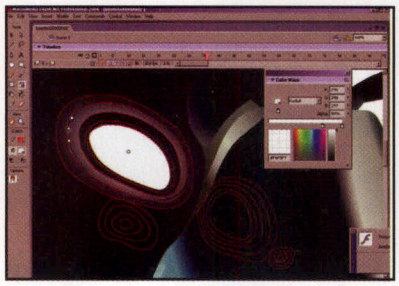


2 The easiest way to start is by choosing the brightest colour of your glare and applying it to the centre circle. The brighter the centre colour is, the more brilliant the glare will be. For softer glares try using a white fill, but apply a 25 per cent alpha.

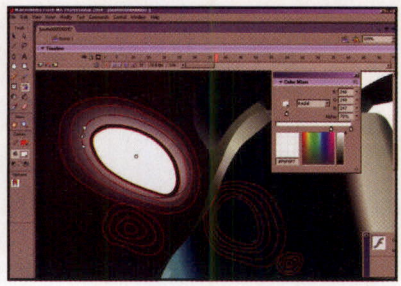


3 The next step would be to create and apply the last ring. The idea is to use radial gradients with slight colour change on each ring of colour. For the bottom ring of colour, create a radial gradient of 25 per cent to 5 per cent alpha white. Position the gradient with the Fill Transform tool.

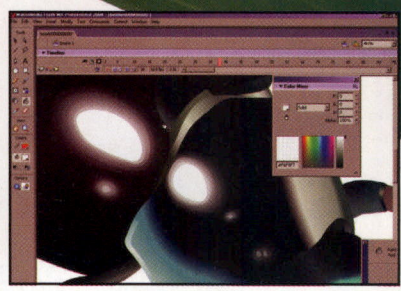
Organic shaped glares continued...



4 On the next ring graphic use a 50 per cent to 30 per cent alpha white radial gradient. The different gradients do not have to connect perfectly, but make sure that at 100 per cent view the transition is smooth enough.



5 The third ring-shaped gradient is 75 per cent to 50 per cent alpha white. Play around with the percentage and position of the gradients; you may find they connect better by overlapping the percentages since the shapes are organic and certain gradients may stretch out wider than intended.



6 Apply the same kind of technique to the other outlines. If you're finding that this larger outline is difficult to perfect, try a smaller outline first. Don't be too worried about what they look like zoomed in; remember it's what they look like at 100 per cent view that matters.

Part 7: Final details

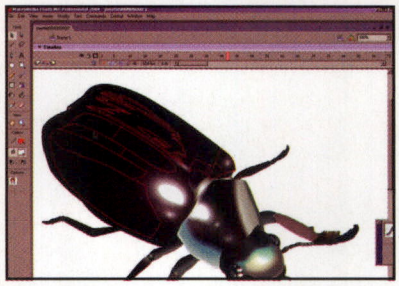
Finish your object by using radial gradients and solid graphics, then create a background environment...

Small highlights

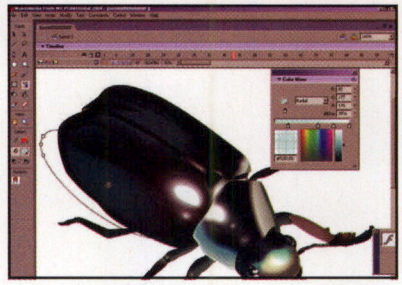
Creating a small highlight may be as simple as making an alpha radial gradient. Perfecting the contour of how it fades out is the key to making your highlights look like realistic reflections or shine spots. Create a white radial gradient with one colour swatch of 50 per cent alpha and the other colour swatch 0 per cent alpha. Create a third colour swatch in the centre of the gradient line by clicking on the centre. Make that centre colour swatch 25 per cent alpha and position it slightly in either direction. Modify that centre swatch and see how the gradient changes in appearance.

Further reading

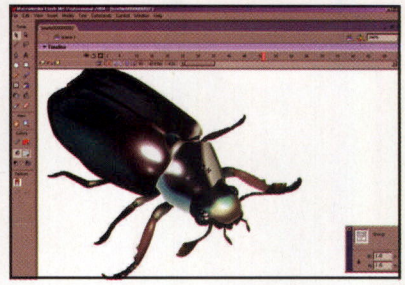
If you want to know more about illustrating with *Flash*, check out Robert Firebaugh's book *Illustrating with Macromedia Flash MX 2004*.



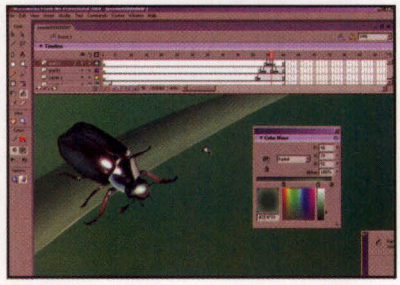
1 To add a reflective shine to the back of the beetle, draw outlines with the Line tool and use the Selection tool to manipulate the lines. Visualise how it will spread out, make a centre outline and create a thinner outline around it.



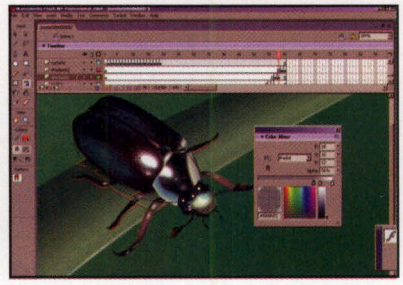
2 Use the Colour Mixer to create a teal radial gradient with different levels of alpha. The more colour swatches you add to the gradient line, the more intricate your gradient can look. Try repositioning a swatch to see the result you'll get. The more familiar you are with how the Colour Mixer works, the better your results will be.



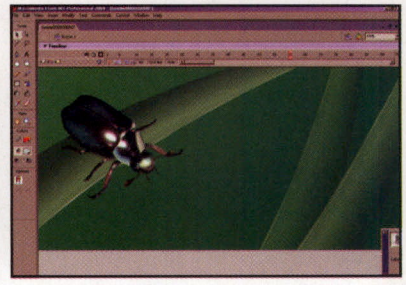
3 To give your object an extra photorealistic edge, create simple white radial gradients with different alpha settings and place them in areas where highlights are present and where you wish to create the allusion of a textured surface. To give the appearance of a more coarse texture, use solid fills that are small in shape and in larger quantity.



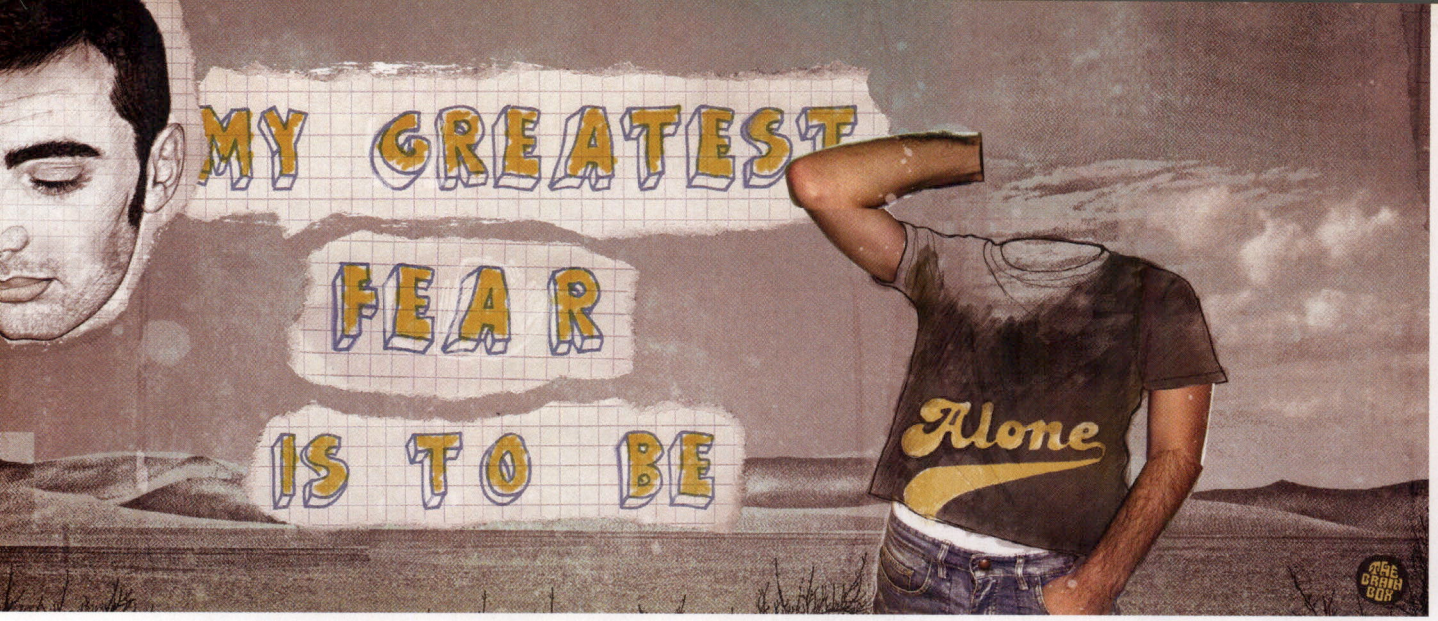
4 For the background, create a simple radial gradient in the shape of a long leaf. Draw many curved lines with the Line and Selection tool on top of the leaf and colour them a slightly darker colour. Add a thin linear gradient coloured light green to give a highlight to the edge of the leaf.

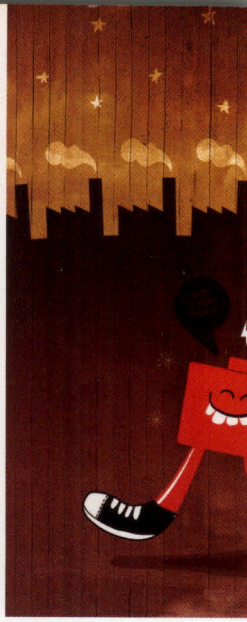


5 Use the Line tool to outline where the radial gradients will be applied to form the shadow of the beetle. Creating graphics such as shadows, highlights and textures are key elements that will make your object look more realistic. Copy the leaf, duplicate it twice and position them to the right.

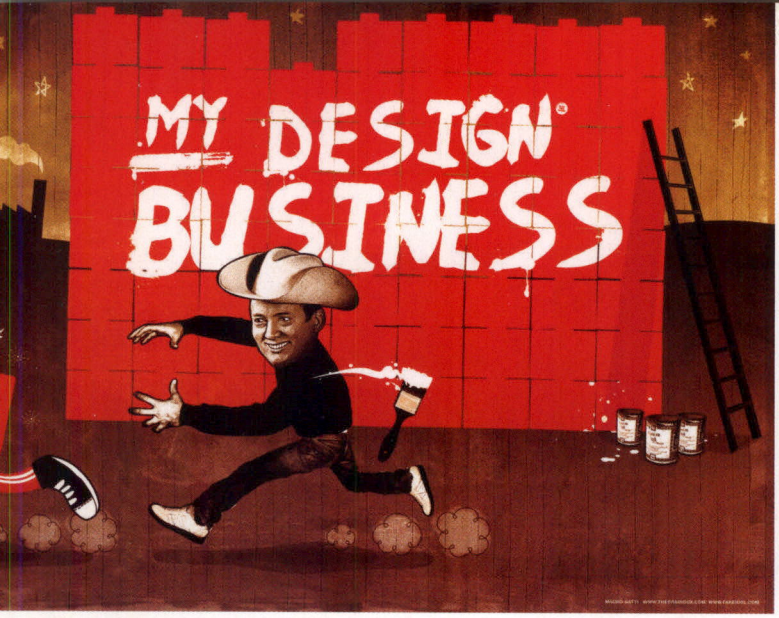


6 This photorealistic image should give you a good idea of the illustrative possibilities of *Flash*. Start off with simpler objects, such as a computer monitor or a calculator, and practise techniques such as layering gradients and connecting them together to create new shapes. ca-p


MY GREATEST
FEAR
IS TO BE
Alone
THE BRAIN BOX



HELP ME!
SELL YOUR SOUL!
From:
Slavery
To:
Freedo
HELP ME!



Far-left: 'My greatest fear...' was produced for the Italian online/offline magazine *Paperkut* and demonstrates Mauro's sensitive side. Middle: 'My design business' was an editorial illustration for a feature in *Computer Arts Projects* on how to start your own design business. Above: A flyer designed to promote the summer event 'Mtv Onstage'.

Profile: TheBrainbox

"I think that illustration is an ever-green world where beauty is not directly linked to technology or trends." Mauro Gatti, creator of TheBrainbox, reveals illustration's magical kingdom...

"The fun fact," says Mauro Gatti, "is that I always wanted to be a doctor." If this had worked out, the 'funny bone' diagnosis might have been in play a lot more often. As things stand, Mauro specialises in dishing out the best form of treatment available: laughter.

Behind it all lies a simple motivation: "I want to see people smile at my work and I want to express strong concepts through a funny style." Set up as a 'personal playground' in 1998, TheBrainbox gives this multi-talented artist a place to show off the full range of his creative endeavours: "From the most experimental to the most commercial."

There's also a selfish element: "I really dig the idea of having a 'free' space to host all my works." Who wouldn't dig that? We also have an added benefit: "If you look at my site, you can have a bite of my personality." And Mauro is a friend who's always glad to see you.

Being there

"If I look in the past, I think it all started with a Commodore 64 and Marvel Comics," says Mauro. A combination of *Jeep Command* and the *Silver Surfer* led the young Mauro away from the hospital doors in the general direction of digital art. His parents must curse that decision.

"I've never been to art schools," he states. In the time-honoured comic book tradition, Mauro is self-taught: "All I know and all I'm able to do comes from experience." And the Milan-based raconteur can do plenty: motion graphics, print, illustration, web design. There are few areas he won't happily overwhelm with his witty visual style.

Finding a path to TheBrainbox hasn't been without its trials though: "My first job consisted of 'open-crop-resize' of about 100,000 images for a CD-ROM project." The perseverance has paid off: "I love the freedom to work when I want and where I want." It's not a jackpot payout mind, more of a Thunderball, because: "I usually work 18 hours per day!"

Funny ha-ha?

"Humour is everything to me, I really love the idea of representing anything by a 'funny' view," continues Mauro. Deploying his own brand of humour is what he does best and enjoys most. But if you're tempted to dismiss his work for that, you'd be making a mistake. As demonstrated by pieces such as his brilliant animation for 'I am static' and illustration for 'Re-Birth', there's something strange here too; it's not just slapstick we're dealing with.

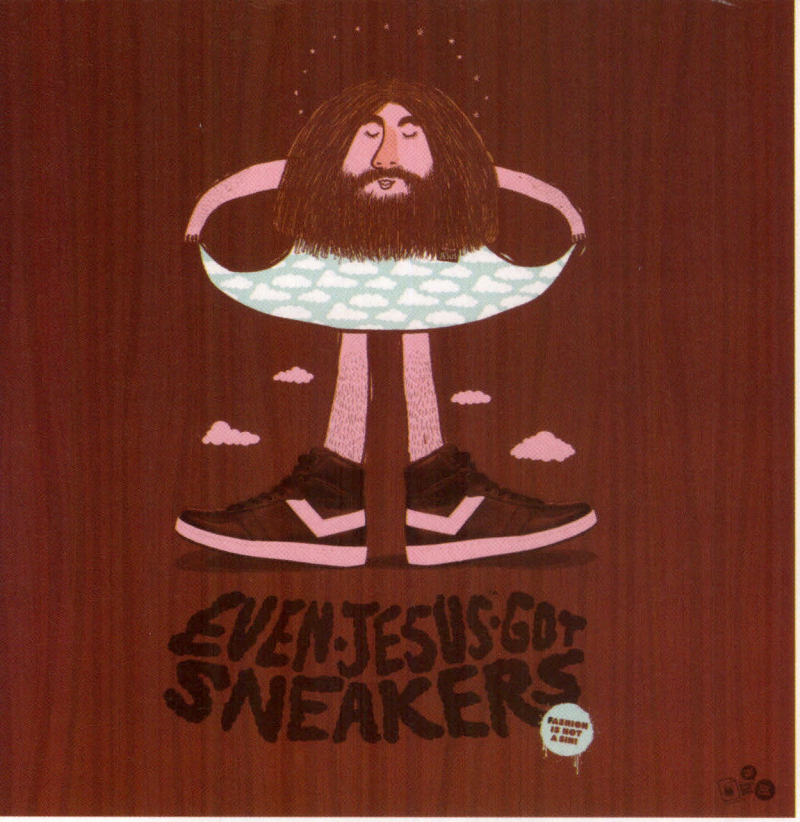
"The first reaction is a smile" — Mauro even describes his style as 'funny' — "but if you look deeply, you can see a message, a concept behind the graphic." Like many of life's best moments, the message isn't shouted at you, it's revealed while you're still smiling. "I really love to see what an idea can become and the way people react at it," he says. This is something Mauro clearly relishes.

"It's good when everyone can enjoy your works, first with a smile and then with reflection." This may sound like a fairly humble ambition but it's not — to draw a smile and a thought from your audience is hard even when you know them well. Mauro's audience is much wider: "From one to one hundred."

Maniac of details

Personal development is a difficult thing to manage, but keeping those skills pin-sharp is essential if you're going to pull in the right kind of work. Mauro has a suggestion: "There is one thing that I love doing," he confides, "I doodle everywhere I can." So, if you're not making the

Left: An illustration created for Huddersfield University's *Black Day to Freedom* book, this image shows Mauro's personal feelings on the situation of refugees and asylum seekers.



Above: This poster was made for a shoe exhibition in the international fashion capital of Milan.
Right: Back to Mauro's sensitive side with this CD cover for Kamino's *Don't consider me a friend.*

Growth movie

The call came in from the guys at the 'I am static' project, "Probably because they liked my style." They had an exhibition themed around the concept of 'Growth' and wanted Mauro to produce a video for them.

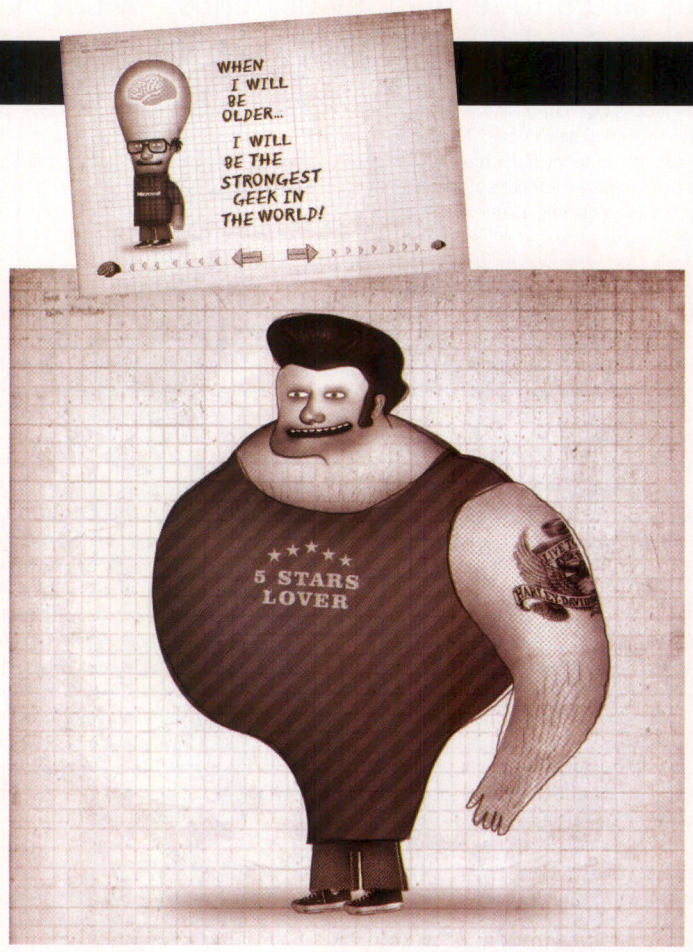
Everything was falling into place: "It was also a good occasion," says the artist turned animator, "because I really wanted to do a black-and-white video." This was the chance to do it with total creative freedom.

That just leaves the actual story: "After a couple of days I started to ask myself some questions." Things like, "Do you enjoy the way people grow up?" and "What if you did not have the chance to grow up?"

These considerations naturally led Mauro to produce a giant Elvis clone and the strongest geek in the world. Then he moved on to, "What can stop you from growing up?"

The first draft began with a boy in a war-torn country, but this wasn't working: "Then I made a storyboard that showed a boy, his dreams and his right to grow up." The message was, "There is no future in war."

Turn to page 54 to find out how Mauro's 'Growth' movie was made.



The biggest Elvis clone in the world, from Mauro's excellent animation, shown as part of the 'I Am Static' exhibition. Discover how he animated the big man on page 54.

kind of artistic progress you'd hoped for: "Just doodle everywhere you can and you'll get better."

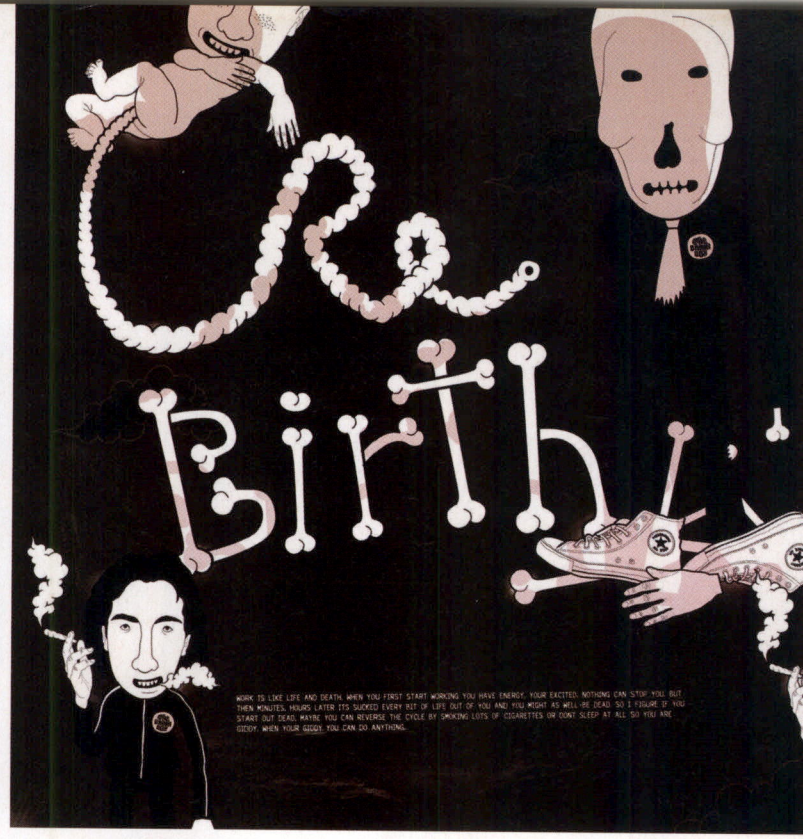
Take another look at TheBrainbox and you can see that free association is clearly in evidence, that doodling may have paid off in more ways than one. The ideas which lie behind Mauro's work aren't cultivated, they're free range: "I don't do any particular search to 'find' ideas," he says, putting 'find' in inverted commas. This suggests that the ingredients are already present; they just have to be properly combined.

Then Mauro makes this observation: "Usually, I don't listen to music during the conceptual phase. For this, I really enjoy silence and solitude." It's like there's some careful measuring going on during this process, the balance of a piece is decided early on. "In the following phases I love music and noise around me," he adds. And once he's on his way, there's no stopping him: "I think I work fast even if I am a maniac of details."

A messy world

Not having been classically trained has its advantages. For example, flexibility: "I love to work on every kind of project, from print to internet and television." One thing that comes in for special attention is motion graphics, which has a unique, if unhygienic, appeal: "Seeing your drawings in motion may make you drool." Mauro's love of his medium is clear: "I enjoy my work because it's my passion."

The doodling philosophy finds its way into Mauro's working practice too: "Everything starts from pencil and paper." There's a very organic feel to the work that this approach produces, Mauro acting as a kind of filter on his world, "a messy world" that inspires him. And inspiration is what it's about: "I believe more in concepts than in techniques." As the man says: "There is no plug-in that can replace a lack of ideas."


Re-Birth
WORK IS LIKE LIFE AND DEATH. WHEN YOU FIRST START WORKING YOU HAVE ENERGY, YOUR EXCITED, NOTHING CAN STOP YOU, BUT THEN MINUTES, HOURS LATER ITS SUCKED EVERY BIT OF LIFE OUT OF YOU AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD. SO I FIGURE IF YOU START OUT DEAD, MAYBE YOU CAN REVERSE THE CYCLE BY SMOKING LOTS OF CIGARETTES OR DONT SLEEP AT ALL SO YOU ARE GIDDY. WHEN YOUR GIDDY, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

Left: Mauro created this humorous image for the 'Launch!' themed issue of *M-Real* magazine. Above: 'Re-Birth' shows Mauro's view of the potential of reincarnation.

In the end, it's those ideas that attract clients and, in a more general sense, make illustration the force which it is today. "Advertising, television and internet are everyday closer to the illustration's world" – the ever-green world – "where they can find fresh ideas and styles." Mauro's keenly aware that illustration is experiencing a real surge of interest at the moment. This is a double-edged sword though, because it also means there's more to be lost.

Final thoughts

"I love stone walls, wooden furniture and lava lamps," states Mauro. Studio Gatti sounds like a villain's lair, a place where the artist can distil his experience into TheBrainbox while waxing his mustachios. Attached as he is to this laboratory, the villain must have a secret escape pod: "I don't have a specific place to create." Mauro carries his under one arm: "I just need a notebook and my wacom tablet."

"TheBrainbox has to be a reflection of my mood and my passions," he says. These include comics, movies and arcade games. However, the sun has already set on the golden age of cinema according to Mauro: "The 70s-80s period is the best." If there is a downside, it's this: "Sometimes I have to design web portals and I can use just five per cent of my creativity." But this just doesn't bother Mauro because: "Practice is the key to everything."

Mauro's attitude typifies what makes illustration great – non-commercial ambition: "TheBrainbox has never been a corporate-style site because it wasn't made to be a mirror to catch clients' attention." He's just out there doing his own thing: "It's just a place to watch how I see the world." As long as there are people out there like Mauro, there will be a creative light at the end of the tunnel. **ca-p**

For further insight into Mauro's Brainbox, visit **[w]** www.thebrainbox.com.

Sexbook – one key, many holes

"So the brief was around the question, 'What's your vision about sex?'," says Mauro. Before you start sniggering, allow Mauro to point out the purpose of the job: "To raise awareness about sex." Okay, now you can snigger.

The Italian designer and illustrator had been approached by the ACT-AIDS Committee of Toronto to create a piece for an upcoming book. "I always thought that sex is the key to happiness," he says. "This sentence was my starting point." It's a good starting point. "But I wanted to put fun inside my illustration." You can see where this is leading can't you? "Every key needs its hole and if love, it's like a key, how many holes do we have to try to find the perfect one?" A lot.

"If I associate the metaphor of the key and the hole with a sexual intercourse, I will achieve a better result!" And better results are what we all want, let's face it. Mauro puts it best when he says: "So I made a boy with a key for a penis in front of hundreds of holes."

It's an enduring image, with an important message: "Love is the key to happiness, but you have to find the right hole to fit your 'key' into!" Got that?

Intended by the ACT-AIDS Committee of Toronto to provoke thought around issues of sexuality, Mauro's contribution goes for the jugular.

IT'S ALIVE!
7. Match to its name and value.
(So Unless it's time to laugh HISTERICALLY)
6. Show 35¢ two ways. Draw.
VICTOR WAS A NOVICE
5 STARS LOVER

Bring your illustrations to life

Draw a character in *Photoshop* and then animate it in *After Effects* to produce a broadcast-quality short film...

Over the following pages, we're going to show you how to create an animation in *After Effects* which starts life as a hand-drawn character. The mood of the movie is going to be rough and funny and we'll work a lot on the character design to make its movements smooth and cartoonish.

We start by creating a character in *Photoshop*, and the most important thing to bear in mind at this stage is to create each part of the body on a different layer. By working in this way, we'll have full control of the animation and the result will be more accurate.

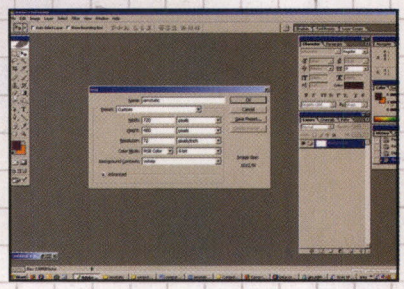
There's a big difference between hand-drawn animation and computer animation. With hand-drawn characters you work on the basic poses (the first and last keyframes) of the scene first, then the in-between drawings are created to complete the action. With computer animation, keyframes (the main frames) are created by the animator and the computer calculates the in-between values to create the full animation.

Expertise provided by Italian creatives Mauro Gatti and Luigi Tufano. You can contact Mauro at **[e]** mauro@thebrainbox.com, and see more of his work at **[w]** www.thebrainbox.com and **[w]** www.mutado.com. Find out more about Luigi's animation work at **[w]** www.ginuz.it and contact **[e]** ginuz@ginuz.it.

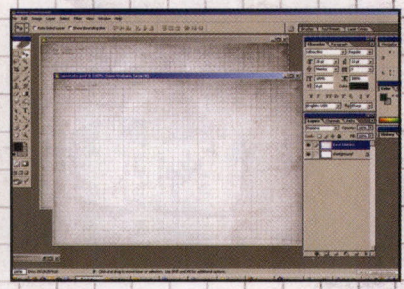
All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on the *Computer Arts Projects* CD70 in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Animation folder. See the finished movie at **[w]** www.thebrainbox.com/video/iamstatic.html.

Part 1: Building the character

Create the file, import the first elements and build the character's 'skeleton'...

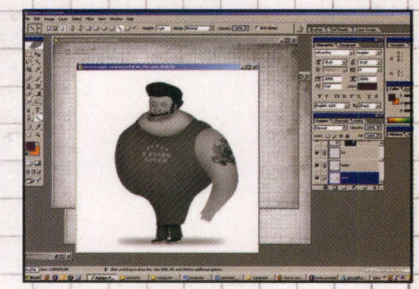


1 Create a new file in *Photoshop* (File>New) and call it 'iamstatic.psd'. The document size should be 720 pixels wide by 480 pixels high, RGB, 72dpi.

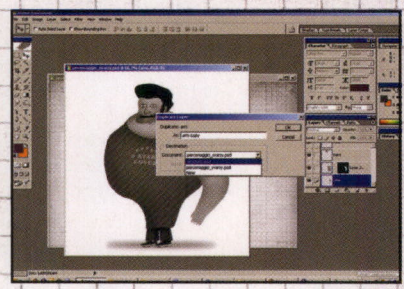


2 Open the file 'texture.jpg' from CD70 and copy (Select>Select All, Edit>Copy) and paste (Edit>Paste) it into the file 'imastatic.psd'. Name this new layer 'base texture'.

3 Now you need to edit the character using a pencil and paper, a scanner and *Photoshop*. From the main menu, select File>Open and select the file 'personaggio_svarzy.psd'.



4 In this file all the layers are messy and you need to 'merge' them logically to create the basic parts of the body. For example, to create a complete arm you have to merge the layers 'arm', 'tattoo' and 'fur'. Link all the layers with the chain icon and select Layer>Merge Linked from the menu.



5 Now you can duplicate the layer you've just created to the file 'iamstaic.psd'. Select Layer>Duplicate Layer from the Command menu, and remember to choose the right destination in the dropdown menu of the Duplicate Layer window.

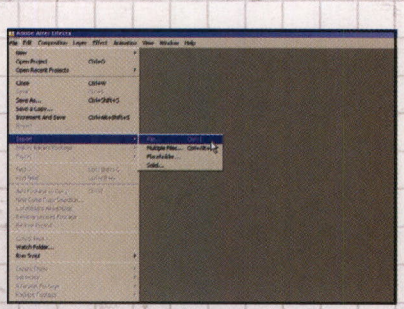
6 Now repeat the process for all the other body parts. Once you've completed the character, you need to name every layer to identify its content (for example, 'mouth', 'face', 'arm' and so on) then save the file. You're now ready to work in *After Effects*. Select File>Close.

Part 2: Setting up the project

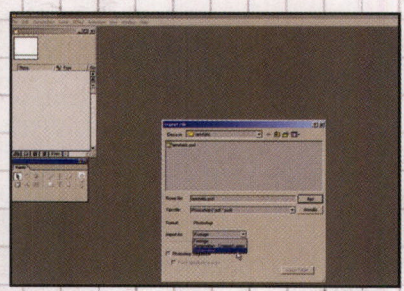
In this section, bring your *Photoshop* elements into *After Effects*...

Funny bones

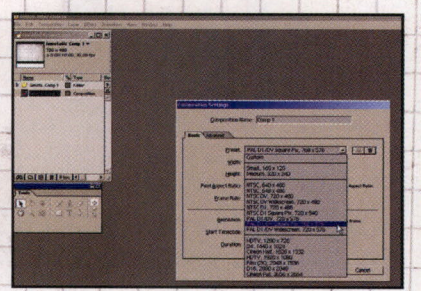
You can make as many body elements as you need depending on the effects you want to achieve. For example, if you want a more realistic result on the movement of the arm or the leg, you need to break it into two parts rather than leave it as a single element. However, in our movie we'll focus more on the 'funny' side of the animation rather than the realistic one.



1 Import your *Photoshop* file into *After Effects*. Simply choose File>Import>File and navigate to the folder where you saved the file.



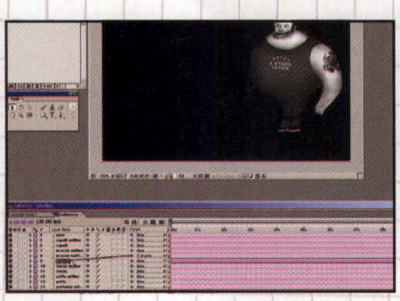
2 Find the file and select 'Import As: Composition'. This setting means that the file will be imported into *After Effects* in exactly the same way as the layers have been structured in *Photoshop*. Every layer will have its original properties and be in its correct position.



3 Now create a timeline. From the Composition menu choose New Composition. In the window choose the settings that best suit your needs. On the original version of the 'Growth' movie we used a PAL setting. Then we made a second project in which we converted all the material to NTSC for international screenings.

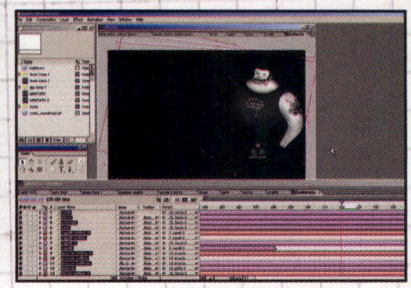
Part 3: Character set-up

Get under the skin and build the character's 'skeleton' and masks...

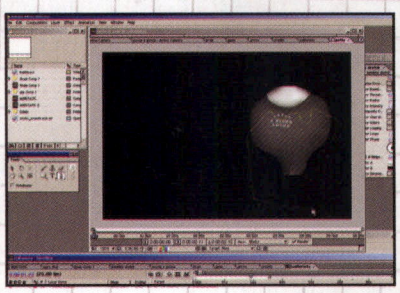


1 Now is the time to drag the files into the timeline. To build the character you need to link the different elements in parent/child logic to create a hierarchical structure. To link the elements simply drag the link point from the child layer to the parent one, or select it from the list just beside the link point.

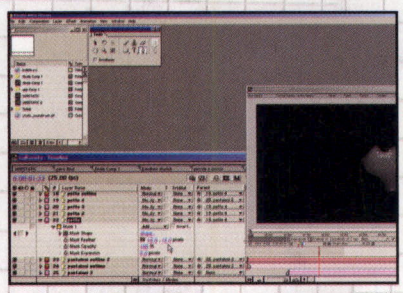
2 The next step is to move the pivot points to the virtual joints of the figure. If you want to attach the arm to the body, move the pivot point of the arm to the top of it, the shoulder. If you want to attach the legs to the torso, move the pivot point of the legs to the top, close to the contact point of the two elements.



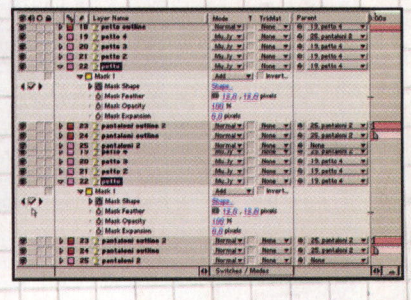
3 These links provide a skeleton structure. If you join all the body parts, you don't have to animate them all to produce a full animation. For example, if you move the arm and the arm is connected to the torso, the torso will move too. So you can pull and push your character simply by moving one of these elements. The result is a more natural looking animation.



4 Now create a series of masks to make the character appear to grow in an eye-catching movement. Select the Pen tool from the Tools palette and draw the mask on the desired layer.



5 Set the mask properties. Expand the layer using the arrow next to the layer name. Then set the Mask Feather setting to 12 pixels to smooth the mask for a better look.



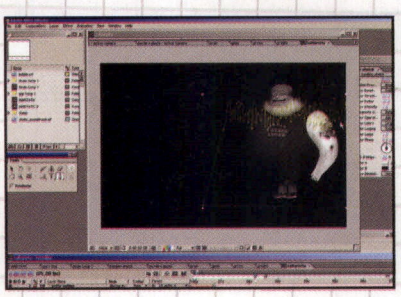
6 Click on the keyframe option and activate the keyframe recording. Now every action of our mask will be 'recorded'.

Part 4: Character animation

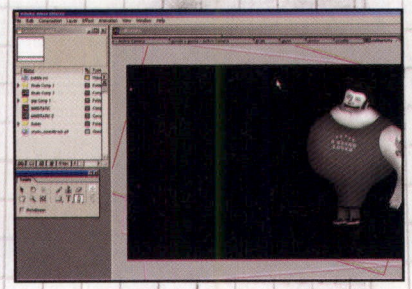
Breath life into your Elvis character and watch him move...

Jagged edges

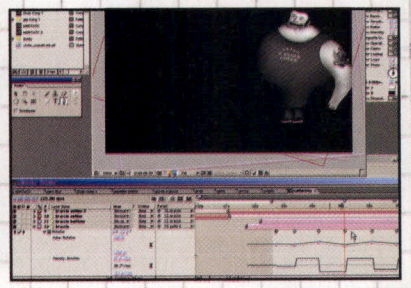
You can create a loop by just copying and pasting keyframes. This will make the curves a little jagged. To smooth them, you can simply fix the handles at the edge of your animation.



1 Repeat the mask animation several times with different shaped and feathered masks to obtain a liquid fill of the character.



2 Now animate the character by moving the elements across the timeline.



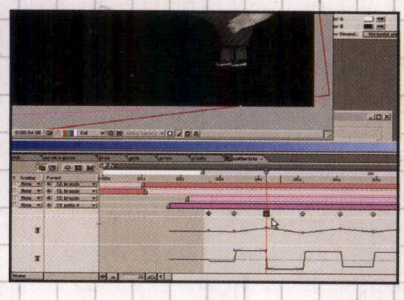
3 After a complete cycle of the swinging movement, copy and paste the keyframes to create a loop of the animated character. To expand the loop, import the character into a second timeline as a single and simple element (called a 'pre-comp') which will animate between the other scene's objects.

Part 5: Keyframe animation

In this section, we take a deeper look inside the animation...

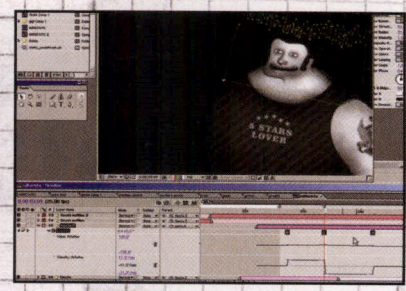
Ease in, ease out

You can access the Keyframe Interpolation in Auto Bézier mode quickly by clicking on the keyframes while holding down the Ctrl key (Cmnd on Mac). This mode gives you an immediate 'ease in and ease out' tweening. You can always modify these parameters by modifying the curve's handlers.

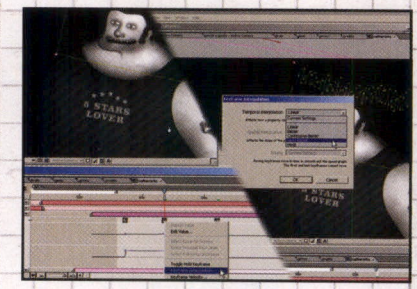


1 To create a keyframe, you have to select the toggle keyframe button. Then *After Effects* will record whatever you do with the object. Simply move your cursor in the timeline and animate the object. A new keyframe will appear in the timeline.

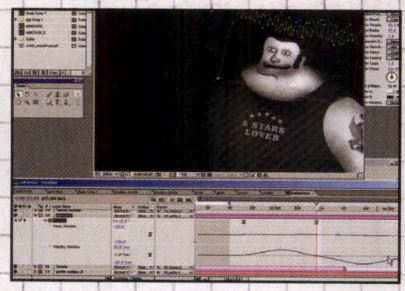
2 You can animate objects by inserting values in each keyframeable parameter or you can move your object with the mouse in the compositing window.



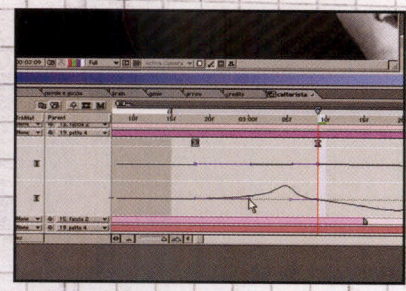
3 You don't have to create keyframes on every frame of your animation. *After Effects* will provide motion tweening between the keyframes you set. The tweening is displayed as a line between the keyframes.



4 The keyframe you create is flat, but the motion is rough (no 'ease in or ease out' in the movement is recorded). Create animation curves to smooth your movements. Select the layer you want to smooth and right-click on the keyframe you want to modify. Then choose Keyframe Interpolation. In the dialog your keyframe is displayed as Linear. Select the Bézier-type you prefer. The keyframe will now display as a circle, instead of a square.



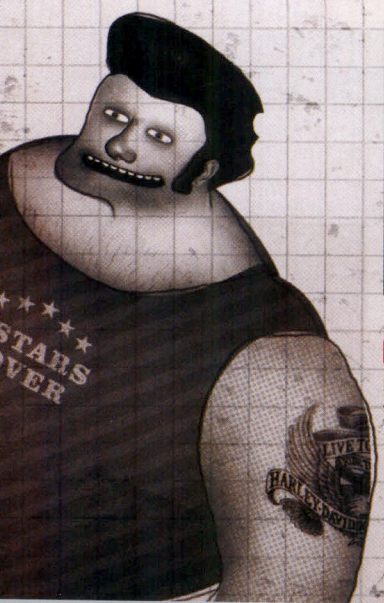
5 If you open the arrow of the transformation operator you're working on, you'll see that the lines of the motion tweening are now curved. There are two curves: Value and Velocity. Moving one of them will affect the related object properties.

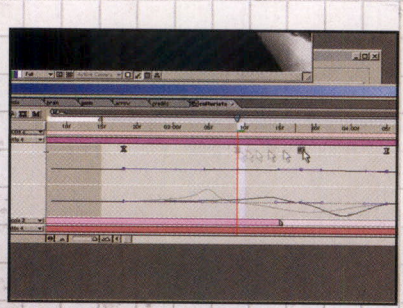


6 To smooth the animation, drag the handles that are displayed under the keyframes. If you pull or push the handles, you'll see the curves smoothing. That smooth shape will correspond with the values you're modifying.

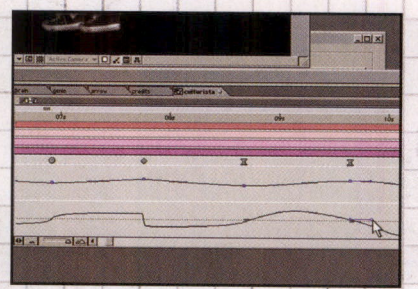
Part 6: Tweaking the animation

You need to play around with curves and timing to get your animation just right...

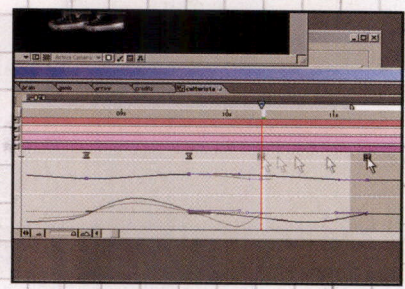




1 If you move the keyframes, you'll notice that the shape of the curves changes. Moving the keyframes through the timeline changes the tweening that the software generates.



2 Now just try to mix movements and curve modifications to see how the animation changes. You can affect the values and the speed of your animation just by touching the curves' shapes.



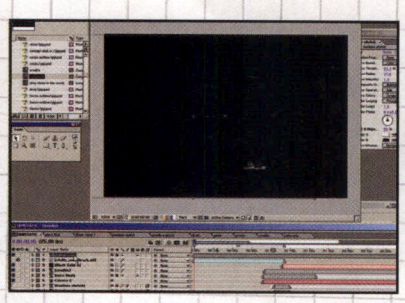
3 You can tweak your animations by moving keyframes and curves. It's a logical and simple way to create the effects you want to achieve. You can animate a rough movement and then tweak it in the timeline faster than you could imagine.

Part 7: Putting it all together

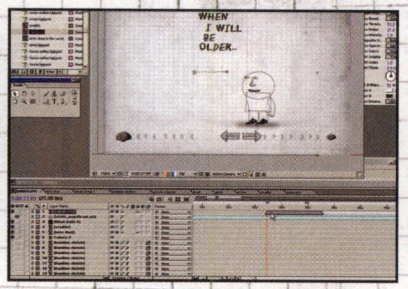
Insert the character into its world and prepare the movie for rendering...

Rendering

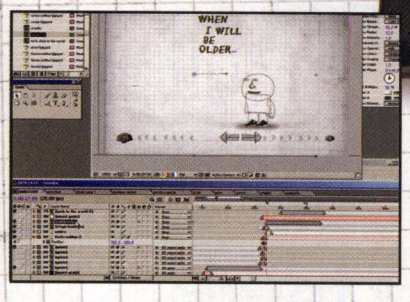
If you have a lot of layers and the rendering of your project is a memory-consuming task, you can render the movie as a non-compressed file, re-import it in the project and apply the de-flicker filter to the movie. Remember that blur is a memory-intensive effect so if you have difficulties, you can always render your movie and then apply the blur to a simple and lighter movie.



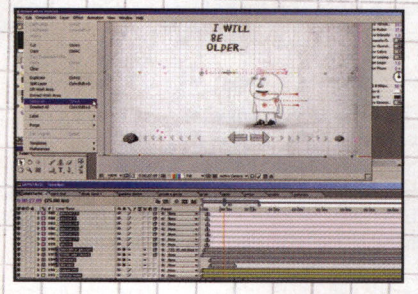
1 Now that you've animated the character, you can put it into your main project. We recommend that you splice big projects into smaller parts to control them better. Drag the character composition from the project window into the main timeline of the project.



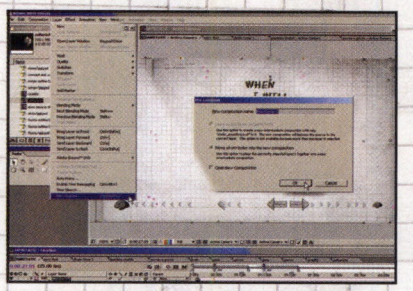
2 The first time you drag an element from the project window into a timeline, *After Effects* will position it at frame one. So you have to move it into the right timing if you want to make it end at a certain point. You can do this easily by dragging the element and its handlers.



3 Then you have to move it from position one in the timeline's vertical layers order to the position where you need it. Your character is now where you want it to be, integrated within the scene.



4 If your animation is for TV, you could face some problems. The most common problem is that sharp images in video will flicker. The solution is to slightly blur the whole video. Graphic designers will be horrified at the thought of this, but you won't notice too much difference if you do a good job.

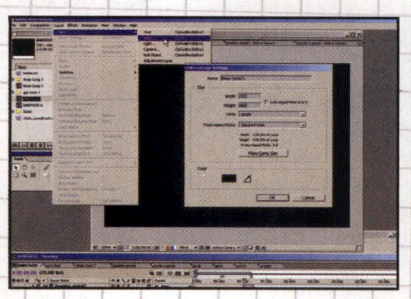


5 The only way to blur the whole video is to have it in one single layer. Pre-comp is a simple way of collapsing different layers into one single layer. So select all the elements in the timeline and go to Layer>Pre-compose. There are some useful options, but you can use the default values. The software now displays a collapsed layer on the timeline.

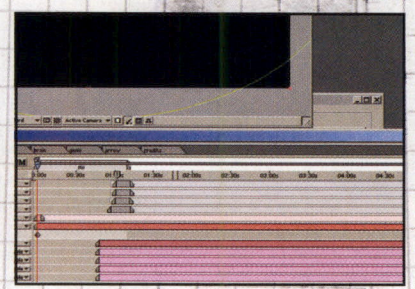
6 Now right-click on the layer and go to the Effect palette. Choose Video>Reduce Interlace Flicker, and use a very low value. We used 0.8. Sometimes we use 0.3 or 0.5. Now if you render the video, the result will be a smoother video edge that will display sharply on TV.

Part 8: Ageing the movie

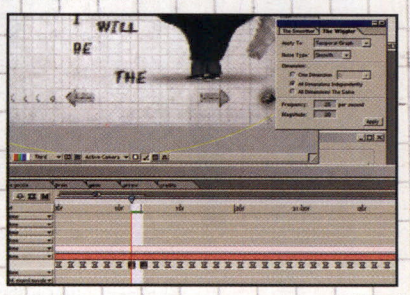
The final part is to add an atmospheric touch to your video...



1 We decided to give our video an aged look. To create an old Super 8 flickering effect we decided not to use a plug-in such as *Aurorix* or *Cinelook*. Instead, we made it with a simple black layer generated in *After Effects*. Go to Layer>New>Solid. Then create a black solid and mask it with a round-shaped mask. Set the Feathering to high.



2 Now go to frame one and set the Transparency to 100 per cent. Then go to the last frame and set the Transparency to 20 per cent.



3 From the Window palette select The Wiggler. A dialog will appear. On your timeline, select the two keyframes you've just created and add some values in The Wiggler. We used a frequency of 25 per second and a Magnitude of 20. This gives you a nice flickering effect like you'd see in an old black-and-white movie. ca-p

Profile:

Fat Truckers Union

"I want to make work that celebrates the working class, the poor, the spartan, the dark underbelly of America." Fat Truckers, bringing you the real thing since the year 2000...

"After college I started to move into graphic design and typography," says Scott. "Those things just seemed to be more in-demand than some guy drawing skulls and monster trucks." The Fat Truckers Union allowed for the continued development of these interests while the artist also maintained a career as Scott Gursky, freelance illustrator, who designed this month's cover artwork (above).

He's not fat and he doesn't drive an articulated lorry for a living, but Scott Gursky, the illustrator, designer and sole proprietor of the Fat Truckers Union is passionate about the side of America 'they' don't want you to see.

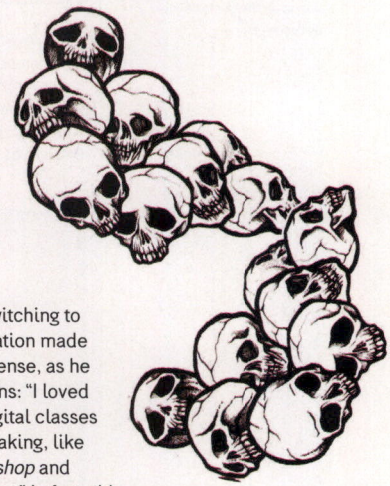
"America is obsessed with glamour, the pursuit of perfection, purity, wealth, and power," says Scott, but he wants you to see the truckers' truth: "A trucker knows that this country used to be full of freedom, expression, and diversity."

That was then, "Now its highways are all the same, all homogenised, uniform, caffeine-free crap." Despite it all, "The trucker keeps doing what he does best... trucking." He's an inspiration to us all.

I can't hear you!

In 1990, when he signed up for life-drawing classes at the local college in Coplay, Pennsylvania, Scott encountered the first major influence on his career trajectory: "The instructor, Myron Barnstone." A former GI, Barnstone was "a real hard-ass." This is clearly meant with great affection because, Scott says, "Without his wisdom and discipline I might never had become an illustrator."

So Scott learned how to draw the hard way: "I remember drawing from plaster models over and over again, until my proportions measured exactly." Those lessons stuck though and five years later he enrolled on an Industrial Design course but after a year decided he "wasn't fit for designing products."



Switching to illustration made total sense, as he explains: "I loved the digital classes I was taking, like *Photoshop* and *Director*." In fact, this whole period has a rosy glow for Scott although "the winters in upstate New York are horrible." In search of warmer climes, Scott migrated to Washington DC and got a job designing sites and games for a company called Magnet Interactive.

Boom and bust

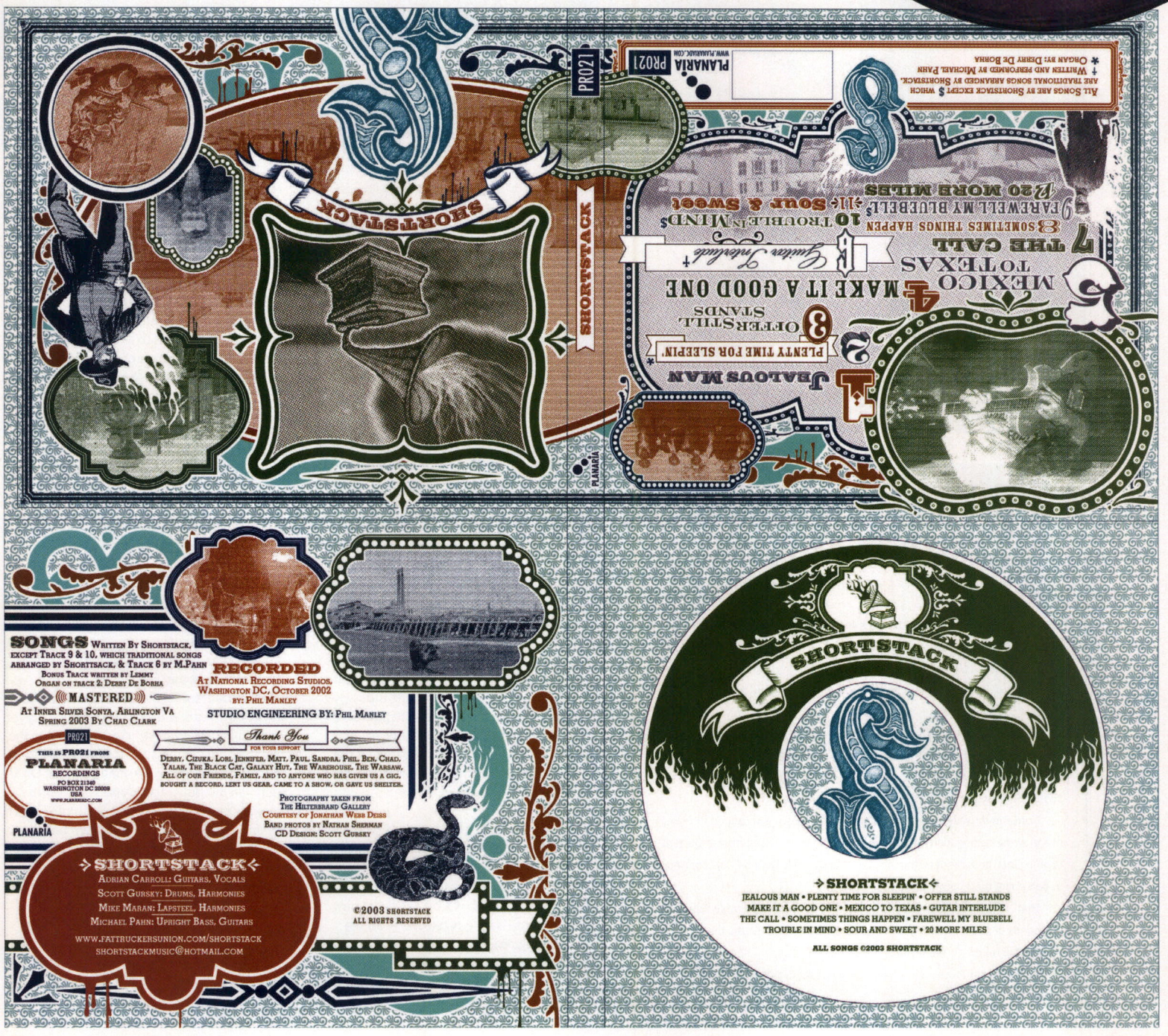
"It was the internet boom and life was good," says Scott. The year is 2000 and post-millennial tension has yet to take a hold: "I liked the job okay, the people were great and the clients were fine." Buuuuut: "After a year I was really sick of corporate bullshit and was rapidly getting bored." To save his sanity, Scott bought the Fat Truckers' URL and started working things out on his own.

"It was strictly personal, a showcase of work I liked to do, about things I could relate to from growing up in Pennsylvania," he says. The FTU was, from the start, about something personal and that's how it's going to stay: "Everything will remain free, I'm not trying to sell a brand or product." Not everyone gets this straight away though: "People have called me and tried to buy the site from me to do just that." How did he react? "I told them to piss off."

Then in 2001 it all went south: "The internet craze was crumbling, Magnet

As a commercial artist Scott (seen on the left drinking coffee) has worked for the likes of VH1, but his personal work is dedicated to documenting a side of America rapidly being obscured by the modern obsession with all things glamorous.

Low Fi RECORDS
"Making Old Records Sound Much Older!"
SHGFTU2001
LF0001
An Experiment in AUDIO DECAY
THE SOUND YOU WILL EXPERIENCE ON THIS RECORD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1 JEALOUS MAN
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4 MAKE IT A GOOD ONE
5 MEXICO TO TEXAS
6 Guitar Interlude
7 THE CALL
8 SOMETIMES THINGS HAPPEN
9 FAREWELL MY BLUEBELL
10 TROUBLE IN MIND
11 SOUR & SWEET
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CD DESIGN: SCOTT GURSKY
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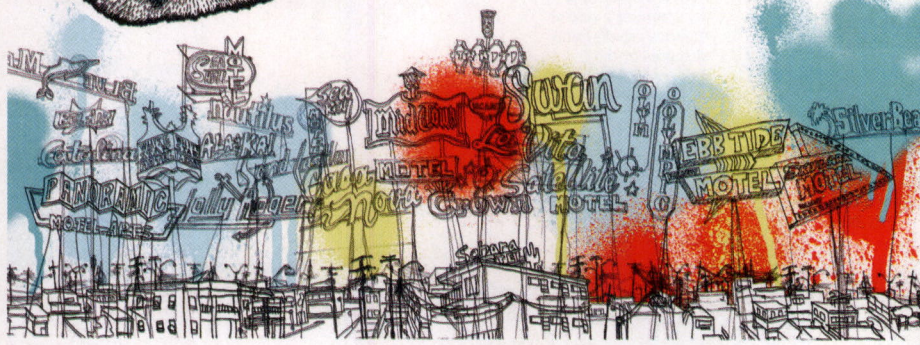

Below: This rendition of Wildwood New Jersey, spiritual home of the neon sign, shows just how serious Scott is about the heritage aspect of these vintage signs. Currently being documented with Daphne Carr, they are a testament to America's rapidly disappearing appreciation of difference.

The neon past

A visit to the Fat Truckers site (**[w]** www.fattruckersunion.com) isn't complete without an educational look at the golden age of the American sign, left over from, what Scott calls, "A time way before 'chain' businesses took over the landscape."

Scott discovered his interest in the disappearing neon signage of the 50s and 60s during the long drive home to Pennsylvania from his base in Washington DC. "I began to admire their forms and typography," he recalls. "Before long, I was photographing them and searching out new ones along the East coast."

The signs, Scott says, are "Strictly American" in a way which very few elements within architectural landscape can claim to be. Despite this, Scott laments that, "Historical societies have not recognised the significance or grasped the beauty of this vernacular art form."

Consequently, the signs are being pulled down and scrapped in favour of a growing homogeneity, "The new American Way." Something important is being lost, and, recognising this, Scott and friend Daphne Carr continue to document their passing.

Then, with a sigh, Scott is resigned: "Maybe it was inevitable that these thousands of miles of road would end up all the same." Maybe the implacable march of 'modernisation' cannot be put off, but thanks to the Fat Truckers Union website, at least we have a record of America's disappearing authenticity.

was bought by a bigger company, and I decided to pack my things and move to New York City." And as we all know, that was a difficult year for NYC. Three years of nine to five later and Scott had enough clients to go freelance.

Keeping it real

"There's a big misconception about the Union," says Scott. "People are always asking me what it is, and thinking it's a design firm that does client work." This it isn't; paying clients get to meet the real Scott Gursky, not a bemulleted truckers' representative.

So what is the Fat Truckers Union? "A strange blob on the internet, made to entertain you." Entertain and inform. Scott continues: "The subject matter is pretty wide and ever-changing. Mostly, it's about Pennsylvania." Scott's trucker is a lonely knight hauling cargo on the road less travelled, "It's about the low-brow, the down and out, the forgotten."

The greatest ambition for the site is coffee table reconfiguration: "My big dream for the Union right now," explains the truckers' champion, "would be to publish a book or nice, thick little magazine, to archive all the work that's appeared on the site over the years." Suggestions on how to make that a reality are welcome.

New York, New York

According to Grandmaster Flash, the city of dreams 'Ain't always what it seems'. Scott kind of agrees: "NYC is a bit overwhelming to a suburban-born guy like me – all the brand names, the high profile clients, the constant flow of all this money."

It's a question of perspective: "I think a lot of designers get too wrapped up in it, they start actually believing what they do is really important, that their ideas for that advertisement or that brand are going to change peoples lives for the better." Clearly, they are mistaken: "I mean, please, what a load of shit!"

"I hate to sound jaded." We love it though, go on: "Seeing how greedy companies can be and how talented designers are forced to work for nothing, while others make tons of money for bad work, it can get pretty absurd." But what can you do? "I wear ten dollar trainers, pack my lunch whenever I can, and live where it's cheap... I love it here, but I'm not climbing any ladders or jumping through any hoops." This boy has real backbone. "I'm doing it my own way, just working and trying to get by."

On the flip side

The truck driver lives a hard life watching a continent lose its character, as Scott explains: "They've seen the small towns with their bright original neon get paved over to make room for chain restaurants and huge supermarts." Fat Truckers Union celebrates the diversity of life.

"The interesting thing about this work," says Scott, "is that it seems to make a bigger impact OUT of context." He's referring to the fact that most of the site's traffic comes from outside the US, from Germany and the UK in fact. "On the flip of that, America doesn't care about my work." There's a simple reason for this: "It's not widely recognised because it's their reality. It's not glamorous." People only ever want what they don't have and there's no shortage of fat truckers. Scott doesn't care: "He's the perfect symbol for what I want to communicate." cap

See more of Scott Gursky's personal work at **[w]** www.fattruckersunion.com.

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Working to a brief

Following an editorial brief means producing your best creative work quickly. We show you how to make the process run smoothly...

This tutorial demonstrates how an editorial illustration is produced, from initial briefing and ideas, to the production of the finished artwork. Editorial illustration can be high-pressure work, with very quick turnaround times, but it also offers you great scope creatively.

The fictional brief for this illustration is that it's to accompany a magazine article about Art and Technology, and the brief calls for an isometric-style illustration. The work is produced with *Illustrator CS* on a G5 Mac, with 20" Cinema Monitor and a Wacom Intuos 2 graphics tablet. For illustration work, computers are just another way of making a mark on a page; in keeping with this, no special effects are used for this job so that the work has a more hand-drawn feel.

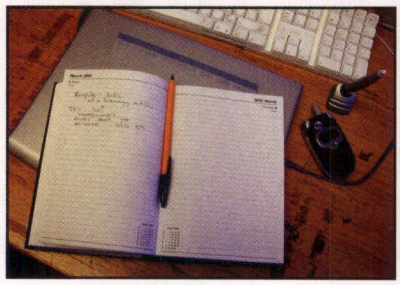
Expertise provided by Rod Hunt. See more of Rod's work at **[w]** www.rodhunt.com and **[w]** www.advocate-art.com. You can contact Rod at **[e]** info@rodhunt.com.

Part 1: Initial briefing

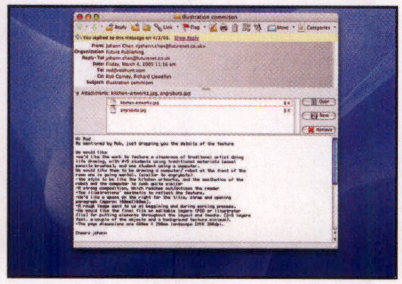
Study the editorial brief carefully and gather your thoughts quickly...

Ideas not details

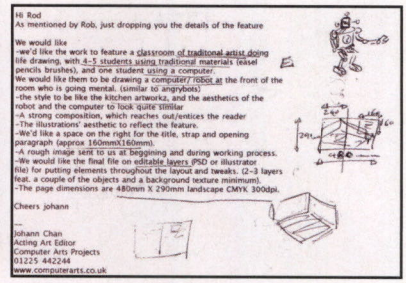
In the initial ideas stage, keep the drawings small, quick and throwaway. The important thing is not to get seduced into details before you've nailed the idea and composition.



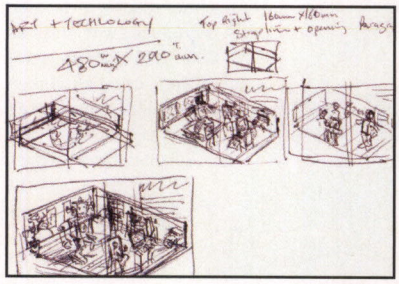
1 If a publisher wants you to do an illustration for a piece of editorial work, the art editor will contact you to find out if you're available. If you are, you'll be given an outline of the article. At this stage, you should ask about deadlines for roughs and final artwork. Once the fee has been agreed, your work can start.



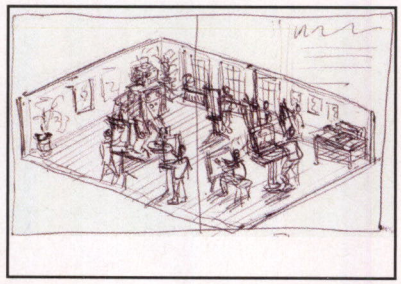
2 The article which the illustration is going to accompany is about Art and Technology. An illustration for a double-page spread is required. After initial discussions with the art editor about ideas, the brief is received by email. You should contact the art editor immediately if any of the points are unclear.


Hi Rod
As mentioned by Rob, just dropping you the details of the feature
We would like
-we'd like the work to feature a classroom of traditonal artist doing life drawing, with 4-5 students using traditional materials (easel pencils brushes), and one student using a computer.
We would like them to be drawing a computer/ robot at the front of the room who is going mental. (similar to angrybots)
-the style to be like the kitchen artworks, and the aesthetics of the robot and the computer to look quite similar
-A strong composition, which reaches out/entices the reader
-The illustrations' aesthetic to reflect the feature.
-We'd like a space on the right for the title, strap and opening paragraph (approx 160mmX160mm).
-A rough image sent to us at beginning and during working process.
-We would like the final file on editable layers (PSD or illustrator file) for putting elements throughout the layout and tweaks. (2-3 layers feat. a couple of the objects and a background texture minimum).
-The page dimensions are 480mm X 290mm landscape CMYK 300dpi.
Cheers johann
Johann Chan
Acting Art Editor
Computer Arts Projects
01225 442244
www.computerarts.co.uk

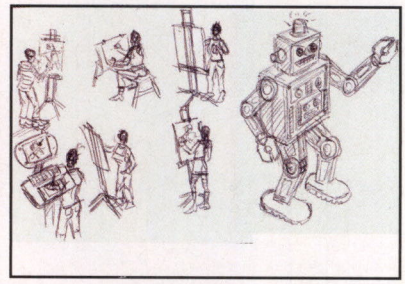
3 Read the brief and pick out the important details. Pay attention to any specific page layout requirements.



4 Do some quick thumbnail sketches for ideas and composition. Consider important details such as page gutter, and any stipulated space for strapline and opening paragraph. Keep important detail out of the gutter, where it will be lost, and away from areas where text will be placed.



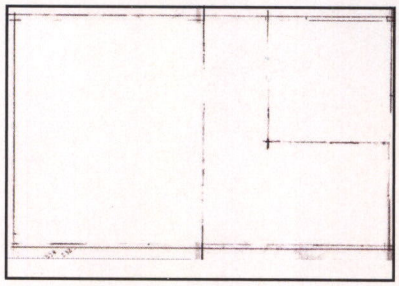
5 Once happy with the idea and composition, work up a bigger quick sketch for layout and positioning of elements.



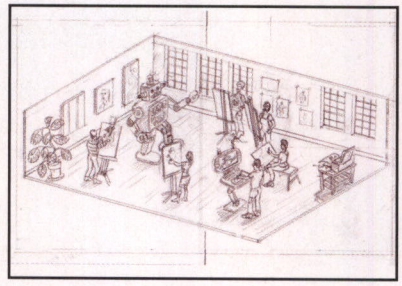
6 Gather any reference materials you may need for items in the illustration. Google image search is a great place to find picture references quickly. Sketch some rough ideas for characters.

Part 2: Provide a 'rough'

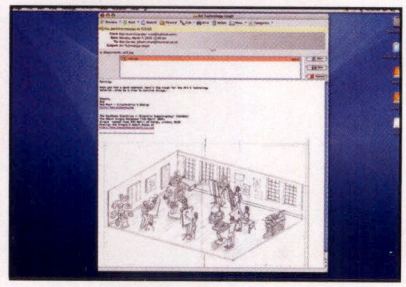
Submit a rough pencil drawing to the art editor for consideration...



1 You'll need to provide the art editor with a finished pencil drawing. Draw it in scale to the layout dimensions. Mark where the gutter falls and where the strapline and first paragraph will be placed. Here, we scaled down all proportions of the drawing area to 85 per cent, to fit it on A3 paper.



2 We create a fairly accurate finished drawing because this will be placed in a background layer in *Illustrator* and used as a guide for drawing the illustration.



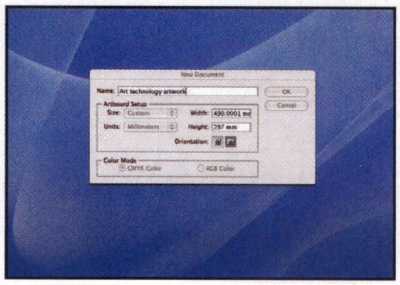
3 Scan the rough and email it to the art editor for approval. There can sometimes be amendments to the rough at this stage, so wait to hear what the art editor has to say before starting work in *Illustrator*.

Part 3: Setting up the page

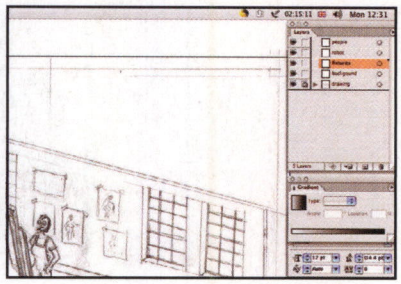
Create a document in *Illustrator* and scan in your rough...

Quick navigation

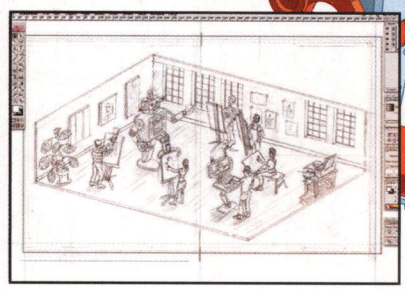
By pressing the spacebar while using any tool, you'll select the grab hand that enables you to quickly navigate around the page.



1 Open a new file and set up a Custom Artboard slightly bigger than the magazine's page layout of 480x290mm landscape. Save the file. Remember to save regularly throughout, because there's nothing worse than losing an hour's work due to a software crash.



2 Place your rough drawing in layer 1 and rename it 'drawing'. The drawing will be used as a guide while drawing in *Illustrator.* Add layers for the various elements of the illustration: background, fixtures, robot and people. Working in layers makes editing different elements in the illustration simple. Lock layers when not editing them.



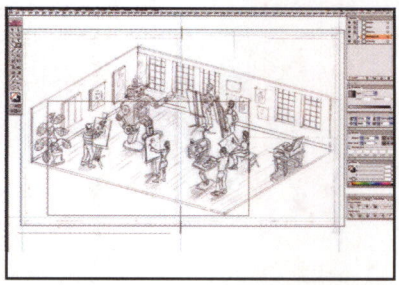
3 Turn on the rulers (Ctrl/Cmnd+R) and place guidelines in the 'drawing' layer to show the size of the page layout and the position of the gutter.

Part 4: Drawing the room

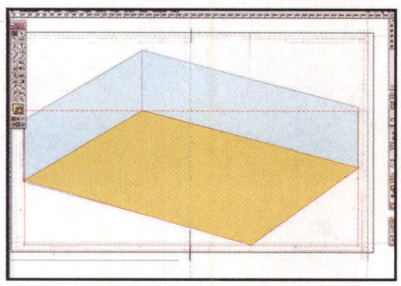
Begin by drawing a room to house all your fixtures and people...

Quick zoom

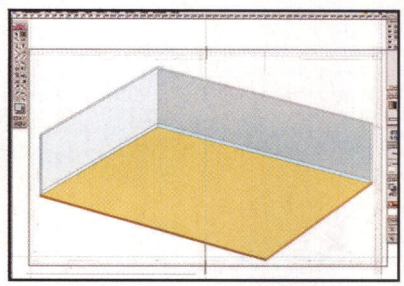
If you're drawing with a graphics tablet and the pen has a side key, set this to zoom in and out. It's one less keyboard shortcut to think about and it helps to speed up work flow.



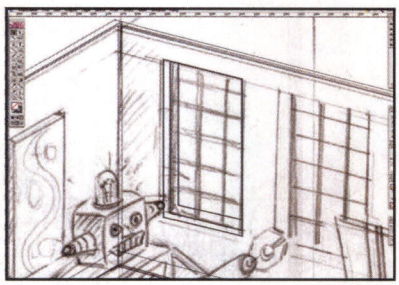
1 Roughly draw in the artwork as quickly as possible. This is partly to save time and it also stops you getting bogged down with detail near the beginning of the piece. Unlock the 'background' layer, select the Rectangle tool (M) and draw an unfilled rectangle.



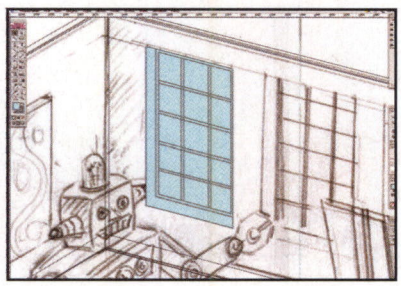
2 Using the Direct Selection tool (A) click on a line between anchor points and shear it so it matches the shape of the floor. Repeat this procedure for the walls. Fill the shapes with the desired colour. If the perspective of the room looks wrong, select an anchor point with the Direct Selection tool (A) and drag it to a better position.



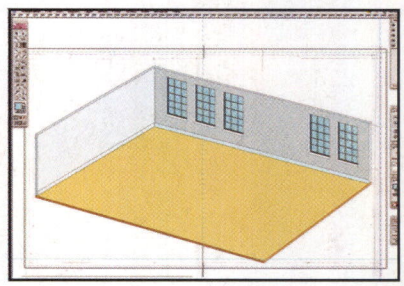
3 By drawing and manipulating rectangles, complete the rest of the room. Where the corners of the top edge of the two walls meet, in the Pathfinder palette use Ctrl/Cmnd and 'Add to shape area' to combine the two pieces. Use the Delete Anchor Point tool to delete any extra anchor points created by the join. Adjust the colours to give directional lighting to the room.



4 To draw a window, lock the 'background' layer and turn the layer to Outline mode to see the drawing below. Unlock the 'fixtures' layer and select it. Draw a rectangle and adjust the angles with the Direct Selection tool (A). This will be the windowsill. Duplicate two more rectangles and move one into position as a window frame and the other for panes.

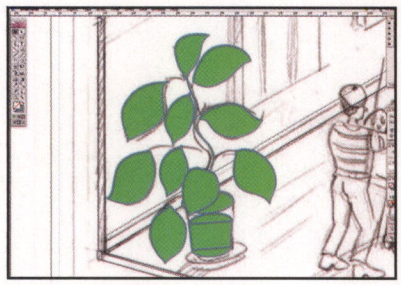


5 Use the Knife tool to cut straight lines (hold Alt while slicing and press Shift to restrict the slice to 45-degree angles). Group (Ctrl/Cmnd+G) the panes. Fill the whole object with relevant colours and use the Direct Selection tool to select and delete any excess between window panes.

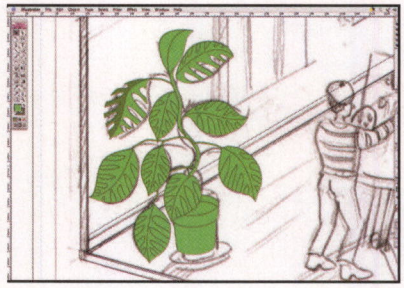


6 Cut the sill rectangle to make a corner. Group all the window objects. Duplicate the windows and move them into place, corresponding to their positions in your drawing.

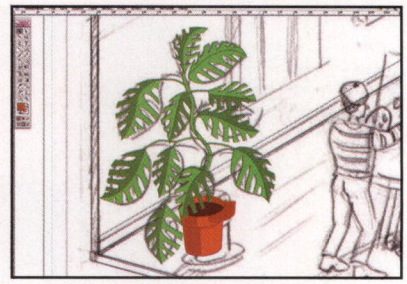
Drawing the room continued...



7 To create a plant, draw the stalk and leaves with the Pencil tool (N). With the Ellipse tool draw the top and bottom of the pot, and add a rectangle for the sides.



8 Combine shapes for the pot, and duplicate this for the top of the pot and enlarge it slightly. Cut the leaves with the Knife tool and group each leaf. With the Direct Selection tool, select and delete the excess. Increase the stalk's Stroke Weight to 3pt. With the Eyedropper tool (I) select the fill and stroke from a leaf.



9 To make directional lighting on the plant pot, duplicate the body pieces, remove the stroke and darken the colour. With the Knife tool cut straight and delete any excess.

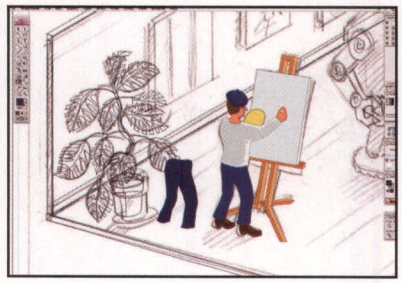
Part 5: Drawing people

Start to draw the characters of the piece, and a couple more objects...

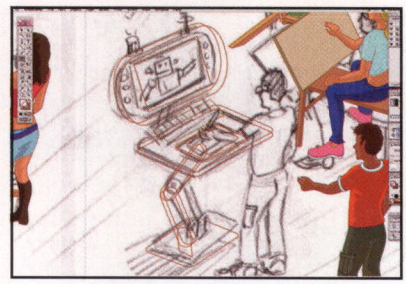
Smooth lines

If you use the Pencil tool and the line is a bit wobbly, you can toggle between Pencil and Smooth tools by pressing Alt.

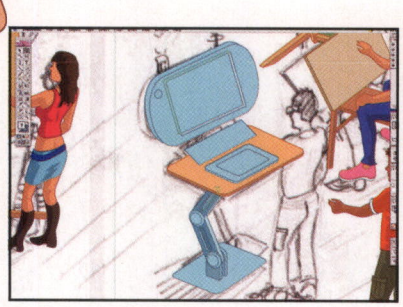
1 Select the Pencil tool (N) with a Stroke of 0.5pt and start drawing the people. If the lines aren't exactly where you want them, select them and draw back into them. Or if they're a bit rough and wobbly at any stage, use the Smooth tool to smooth kinks.



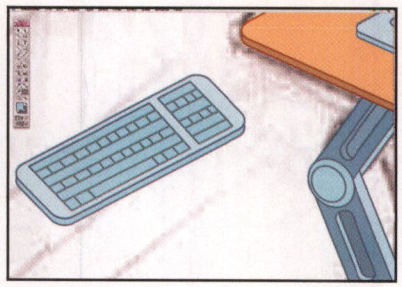
2 Fill the objects and make the strokes a darker version of the fill. Duplicate an object, darken it, remove the stroke and cut away for shadow. Draw in the easel using the same principles as earlier. Group all the figure objects and easel objects separately. Now draw the other people up to the same point. You can finish them later.



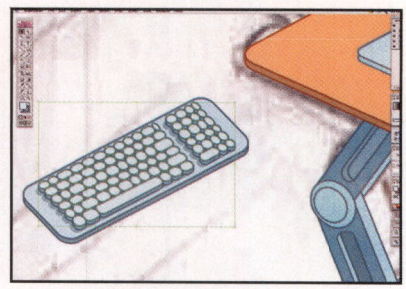
3 Draw the computer terminal using the major shapes of the table top, screen and base using the Rounded Rectangle tool. Rotate into position and use the Shear tool (restrict movement along an axis by pressing Alt while shearing) to give the perspective. Duplicate these shapes for the depth of the objects.



4 Fill all the objects. Draw a circle with the Ellipse tool (L) for the computer stand's joints and shear for perspective, then duplicate. Duplicate a piece of the stand twice, and divide them and delete the excess for the stand recess detailing. Repeat the same process for the screen.



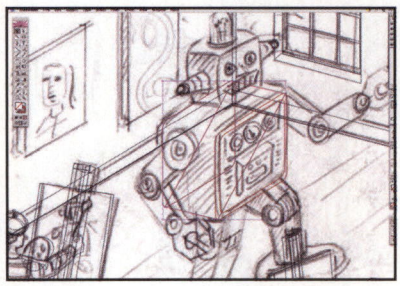
5 For the keyboard, apply round corners to the rectangle and draw another for the keys. Then slice this rectangle horizontally, group and choose every other strip with the Direct Selection tool and slice to make keys. Then choose the remaining strips and repeat.



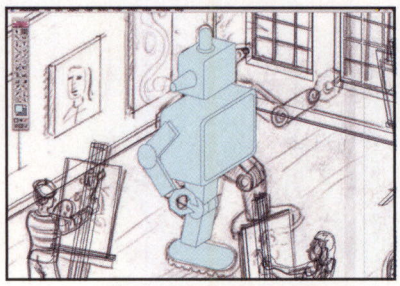
6 Apply round corners of 0.5 to the keys and duplicate for shadows and tops of keys. Group all elements and move them into position on the terminal.

Part 6: Drawing the robot

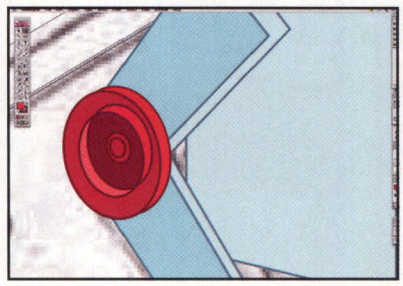
The robot is central to the composition so pay it some careful attention...



1 For the main body of the robot draw a rounded rectangle and shear to the correct perspective. Duplicate it for the front of the chest. Draw a rectangle and with the Direct Selection tool move the lines to make the depth of the body. The back rounded rectangle will be combined with it using 'Add to Shape' in the Pathfinder palette.



2 Draw in the rest of the robot using techniques you've used earlier. You can duplicate the body for the basis of the head shape. Then fill all the shapes.



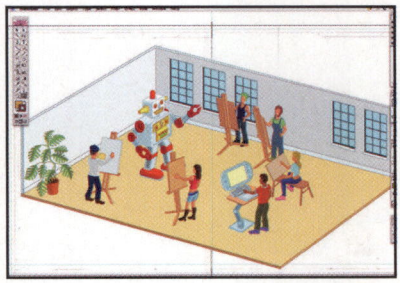
3 To create the arm joint duplicate several circles. Divide two so that it looks recessed. Delete the excess. Using a combination of duplicating shapes, drawing rectangles, and adjusting lines and anchor points with the Direct Selection tool, build the rest of the robot. Duplicate objects and slice for directional lighting. Then start adding detail.

Part 7: Finishing touches

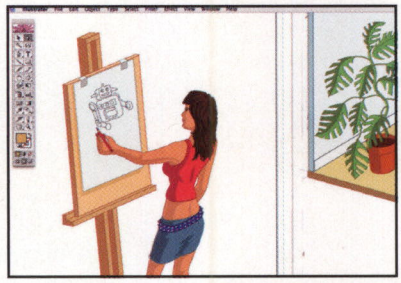
Tidy up all your characters and objects and add shadows and lighting...

Duplicating objects

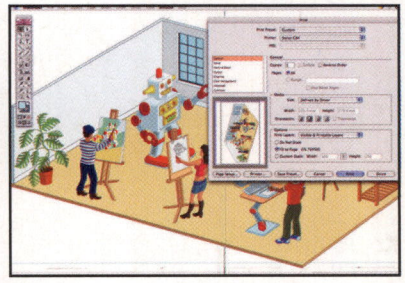
To duplicate an object to another layer, select the object and, in the Layers palette, hold Alt and drag the highlighted box on the right-hand side of the layer to another open layer. If you don't press Alt, the original object itself moves to the new layer.



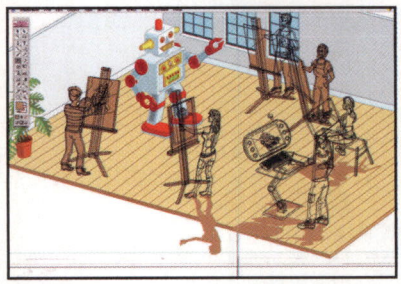
1 The major elements of the illustration are now in place, so it's time to start adding detail. Start by scaling up one of the figures. Note that the Pencil tool is more accurate when working at a larger size.



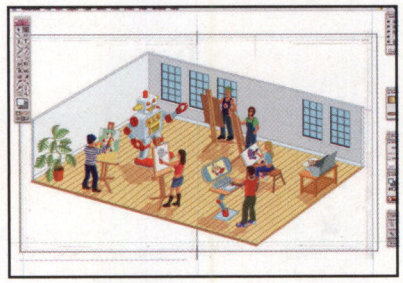
2 Add finer details in the face and clothing and improve any lines you're not happy with by selecting them and editing them with the Pencil tool (N). Once complete, group all the objects, reduce them down to size and put them back in place. Repeat this for all the figures.



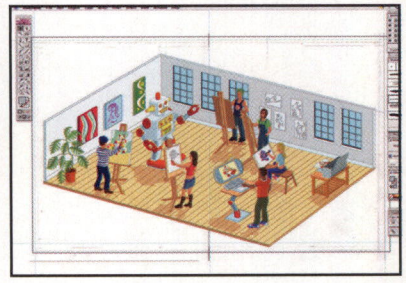
3 Now work on the lighting, shadows and the final few details. Print out your work and check you haven't missed anything. In the 'background' layer, duplicate the floor. Slice it straight to look like floorboards and group all the bits. Delete the fill colour. The shadows will be placed behind so the lines of the boards are seen.



4 For shadows, select all the figures and duplicate them onto the 'background' layer. Lock the 'people' layer and set to outline. Combine each duplicated figure. Select a figure, grab the middle top handle of the bounding box and drag it down, until it's half the original height. Rotate to the direction of the light and shear for perspective. Fill with a colour slightly darker than the floor.



5 Move the shadows under the floorboard lines cut earlier. Turn on Preview mode on the 'people' layer to view the figures. Draw into the shadows to correct anything that doesn't fit properly or looks wrong. Cut away any shadows protruding over the edge of the floor. Repeat this for the robot's shadow.



6 Add any further details such as the paintings and drawings on the walls. That's almost it. Print another proof and then make a few tweaks to details and colour interactions. Finally, remember to delete the original rough drawing. Deliver your work to the art editor for final approval. ca-p

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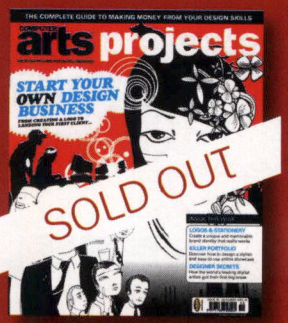

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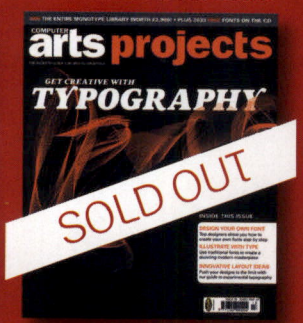

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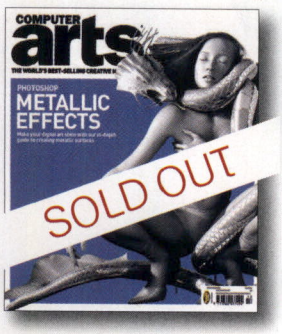

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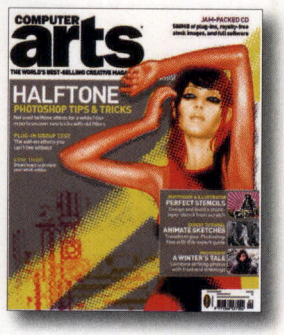

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Celebrity nip/tuck

Caricature needn't be all charcoal and dip-pens. Discover how you can poke fun at celebrities using *Photoshop*...

Caricature is the violent, cruel little brother to portraiture. Where art was once intended to flatter, caricature has always aimed to ridicule. It wants nothing more than to rip your face apart and put it back together again, and laugh at the mess. That said, the art form has metamorphosed a lot since great 19th century cartoonists such as George Cruikshank first sharpened their pencils. It's grown up, got artier, cleverer, more subtle, with the likes of Gerald Scarfe and Ralph Steadman elevating the classroom doodle to an art form. Nowadays, digital techniques have found favour with illustrators seeking a more contemporary look than the now-traditional look of crosshatching and paint splats. But the malevolent intent is still there.

Caricature on computer is no different to on paper. You still have to put the drawing time in, and no amount of filters will ever be able to re-imagine a familiar face in an amusing way. Perhaps the most important point about caricature, often missed by those who dismiss it as silly or less truthful than 'straight' portraiture, is that in trying to capture a famous person's 'essence' , it needs to show more than just a long nose or squinty eye. It needs to exaggerate the features in such a way as to show the personality. Think of Thatcher's hawk-like that turned her into an axe blade, directly expressing her personality; or Blair's big grin, friendly yet dangerous. Caricature shows us what we already know of a person in a surprising new way. In that sense, stretching a nose can be more truthful than leaving it be.

To be successful, caricature needs to reduce a living, breathing human being to nothing more than a simplified cypher, a set of features. It really is a nasty, loveless business. So come and have a go, if you think you're mean enough...

Expertise and illustration provided by Stephen Collins. Stephen is a contemporary illustrator, based in Norwich and London. His work has appeared in newspapers and magazines worldwide, including a substantial body of work for *The Times*. Find out more at **[w]** www.stephencollinsillustration.com or contact him at **[e]** stephen.collins3@virgin.net.

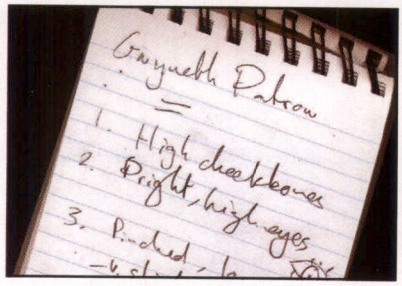
Part 1: The groundwork

Getting to know your character's physicality and personality is essential...

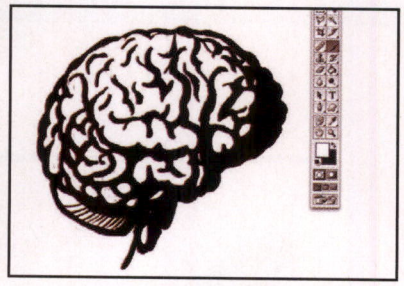
1 The first thing you've got to think about is who your target is. We'll focus here on Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin because it's harder to caricature good-looking people and it highlights the challenges you might face.

2 Research is the most important part of any caricature. You can only mock someone if you know their face, and personality, as well as possible. For the visuals, plough through magazines, and download every image you can find of your subject – copyright allowing.

3 It's also a good idea to seek out video footage of your quarry, to get an idea of movement and body language. Finally, read as much as you can about them to nail the personality. You should stop short of stalking them.



4 Having digested all that, make a list of the five things that define their public image. This, as much as getting the nose right, is what will 'capture' the essence of your subject. With Gwyneth Paltrow, it's a demure vulnerability, a glossy Hollywood look, and, of course, that Oscar acceptance speech.



5 Now you need to decide what sort of caricature you're going for. Are you aiming for the outrageously distorted Scarfisms or do you want it to be biting portraiture? We'll opt for the latter here, but we'll still be distorting the features.

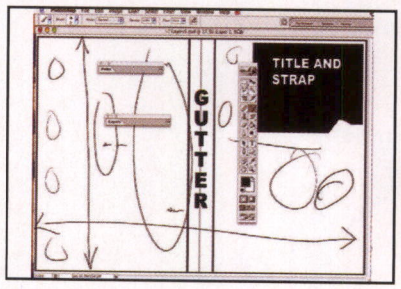
6 Now pick up your HB and start scribbling some straight drawings from your research material. Don't try to distort the features just yet; simply draw their face as many times as it takes you to feel you 'know' their look.

Part 2: Design basics

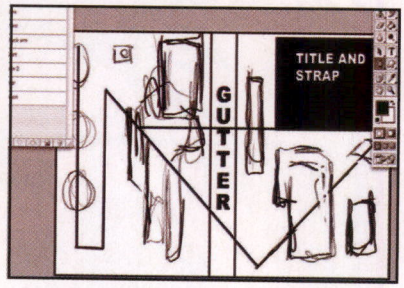
Get the basic composition in place before concentrating on facial features...

Photoshop or Illustrator?

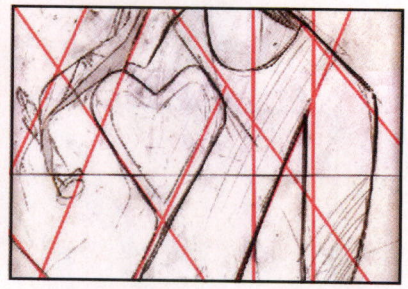
We use *Photoshop* in this tutorial, but *Illustrator* is just as effective for the drawing elements of this process. And because *Illustrator* uses vectors to render forms, rather than pixels, you can resize elements to your heart's content without losing any clarity.



1 Now think about the basic image design. In *Photoshop*, open a new document, larger than the dimensions required by your client (if you've got one). The pixel-based nature of *Photoshop* means that resizing any elements later on in the process could sacrifice clarity. Bigger is always better – but don't crash your computer.



2 Try to simplify the composition to a few lines – here, it's horizontals diagonals and verticals. This will help as you start to balance your subject's body language with the requirements of page design and editorial content. It should also help it have impact. Print this out, with any areas you need to leave empty.



3 Place a sheet of tracing paper over your design. For the body, draw some simple abstract shapes to suit the page design. The better looking your subject, the more you need to accentuate body shape and movement, so striking the right pose is important. Here we're doing a willowy, vulnerable look with thin limbs, shoulders slightly forward, and a long neck.

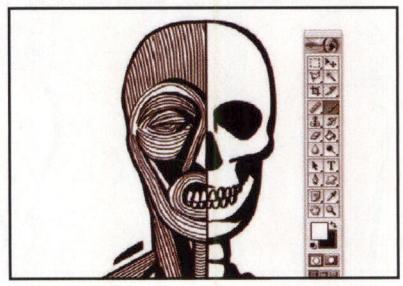
Part 3: Facial features

Learn the techniques for distilling the 'essence' of a famous face...

Think mean

Caricature is necessarily a cruel art, so don't practice on friends or relatives unless you fancy burning a few bridges. It's far easier – and more fun – to represent the negative sides of someone's personality through exaggeration rather than compliment. And after all, the golden rule of satire is always to aim it at people in a position of power. Even if that power just derives from fame.

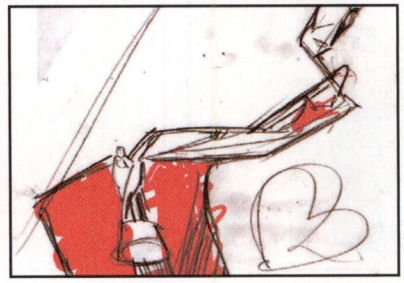
1 Now you're ready to get the face right. Using your previous sketches (and photographs) as reference, decide on a face shape. Paltrow's face is oval with high cheekbones, but you can get away with stretching it a little.



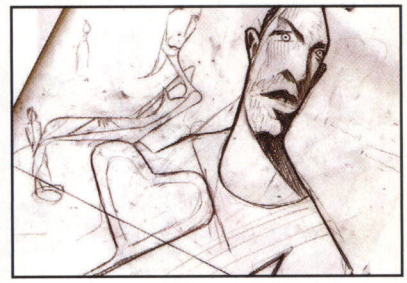
2 Try various compositions of facial features, working as loosely as you like. If you run into trouble, take a look at a diagram of the muscle structure of the face. In Paltrow, the cheekbones dominate, the eyes are quite high, the mouth pinched in the middle. Mentally 'throw' these features in the air and see how they land on the page.

3 With a good-looking person you may have trouble making them recognisable. Whatever happens, avoid at all costs the temptation to Liquify your drawing in *Photoshop*. The more you draw, the better your sense of your subject's face structure, and the more effective your illustration.

4 When you've got a pencil sketch that vaguely resembles the person, erase pencil lines until you lose the likeness, to get a feel for what their look 'depends' on. Now re-sketch, exaggerating the key features of the face. With Paltrow, the lines defining the cheekbones, and the low, pinched mouth are the most important things that tell us it's her.



5 Once you've got the likeness closer, add the body in the pose you've decided upon. Think about the clothing and situations that best represent the person. Paltrow's pink Oscar dress is the item associated with her most personally revealing public moment (when she blubbed on the awards show). So using that will make the association you want.



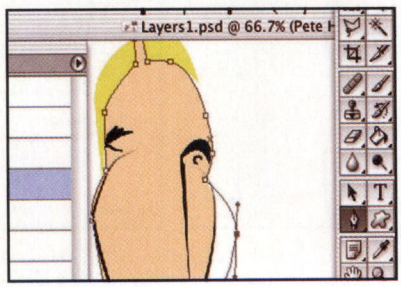
6 Scan your sketch into *Photoshop*, desaturate it and whack the contrast right up. Copy the whole image using the Marquee tool, and paste it onto your page mock-up. Name this layer 'rough sketch' and set the layer mode to Multiply, at 50 per cent Opacity. This way you can fill in colour shapes and draw the lines using the rough as a guide.

Part 4: Get busy with the Bézier

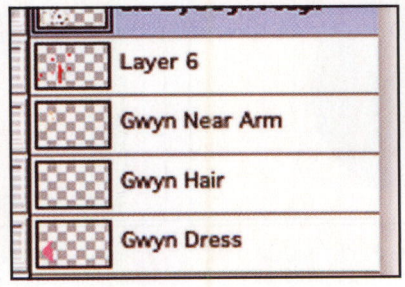
In this section, create some shapes on which to build the illustration...

Bézier curves

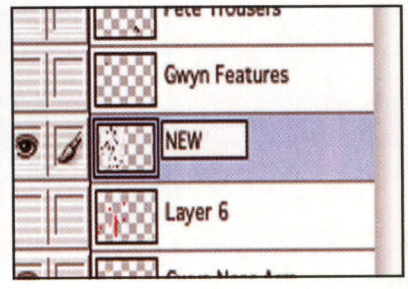
These may be the antithesis of the drunken inspiration of traditional caricature, but once you get used to them they're a great way of capturing clean lines and getting that nose right first time. Using a graphics tablet and stylus will help it to feel less like drawing with boxing gloves on.



1 Open a new layer by clicking the page icon on the Layers palette, then select the Pen tool. Start to fill in simple blocks of colour using Bézier curves. These are the shapes we're going to build the illustration on.



2 Create new layers for each element that obscures another. Here, Paltrow's arm is the top layer, her torso the middle and her far arm the bottom layer. This makes it much easier to make adjustments later.



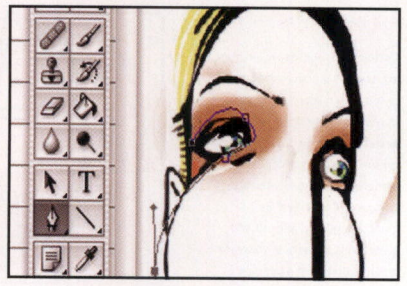
3 As you progress, you should save any important paths you make, in case you wish to change an outline later.

Part 5: Face up

Get the facial features just right and introduce some photographic elements...

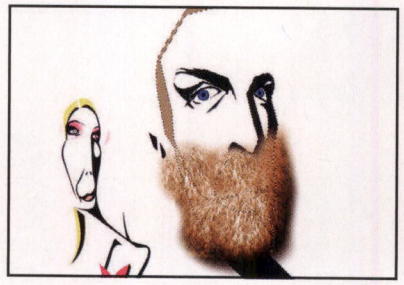
1 Go back to your image file and find the photos that closest fit your drawing's pose and expression. Copy and paste the faces onto your image, merging them into one layer. Resist the temptation to trace the pictures – your style needs to show through the caricature if it's to be effective, and tracing will deaden the effect.

2 Draw features into the computer. Ideally you'll be using a graphics tablet, but if you can draw with a mouse, all the better. Draw in your elements of facial shade, feature, and so on. Rejoice in the freedom of undoing any mistakes – the great caricaturists like Cruikshank would have loved this little function when they were up against a deadline.



3 Tidy up the features using the Pen tool. Put each facial feature on a different layer so you have more freedom to tweak the likeness. Remember, likeness hinges on perfect placing; if an eye is a few millimetres too far to the left, you've lost your subject. Simply marquee and move them, keeping an eye on that photograph layer.

4 Now it's time to come to it with fresh eyes. Have a break, make some coffee, and come back to look objectively at your image. Ask a friend, who they think it is. The chances are you're now too 'close' to the image to see it objectively, and this constructive criticism is essential.



5 Once you're happy with your features, fix them with some facial textures. Use photographic elements to contrast with the clean areas of colour. Keep it minimal, because you want the dominant style to be flat colour with textural elements adding a bit of tension.

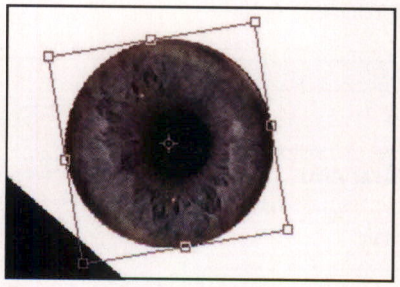
6 Take digital photos of your face or hair, and import them into *Photoshop*. Once you've found a point where the skin texture is just right or the hair sits the right way, marquee the photo element you want to import, feather it a couple of pixels, and copy and paste it into your illustration.

Part 6: Adding textures

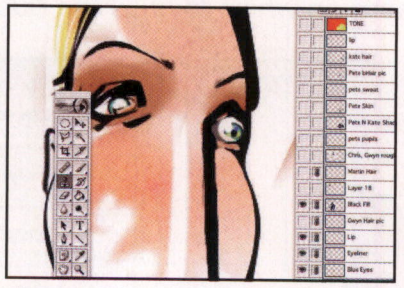
Introduce some textures to draw attention to particular features...

Avoid clichés

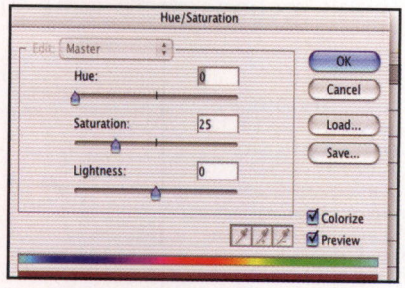
If you want your work to look distinctive, do try to avoid caricature clichés. Avoid crosshatching and huge heads on tiny bodies, and anything that looks too airbrushed. Remember: an enormous nose does not a caricature make, and sometimes subtlety can be more biting.



1 To draw attention to the Chris Martin character's eyes, introduce a photo of a pupil. Once you've copied an image in, clean it up a bit. To get a 'whole' pupil, duplicate the layer, Free Transform to rotate it 180 degrees still fitting over the first layer, and erase the eyelash areas in the second layer. Merge these layers, duplicate again for the second eye, position them in the sockets and make them look the right way.



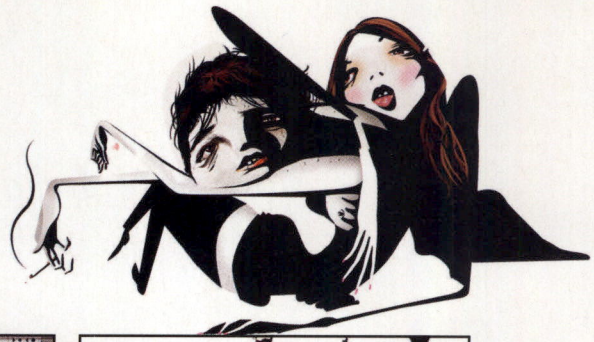
2 If you want some skin texture, go back to your photo and copy an area of skin. Paste it onto your image, name it 'skin layer' and use the Clone Stamp set to a Soft Brush to paste areas in where appropriate. Use the Pen tool to make a path around the areas of texture you want to erase, then click 'Load path as a selection' on the Paths palette, choose Select>Invert the selection (Shift+Ctrl/Cmnd+I), and delete any unwanted areas.

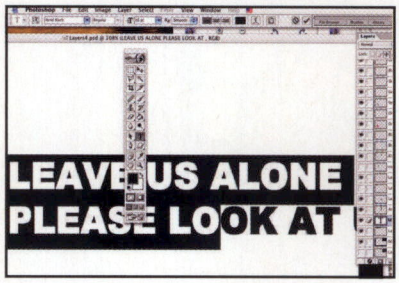


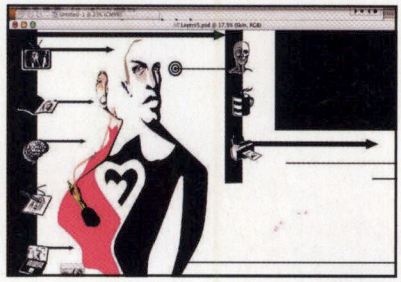
3 With all texture imports, you'll need to adjust the colour and tone to suit the subject and composition. Click Image>Adjust>Hue/Saturation, and 'Colourise' them if they look too intense. You can always adjust the saturation, and maybe blur or paint out excessive detail if it clashes with your flat colours.

Part 7: Contexts

Choose the right environment for your characters to inhabit...







1 Ultimately, what we're doing here is (whisper it) cartooning. And cartooning means writing stuff. So swallow your 'hypereal portraitist' pretensions and say 'I am a gag monkey' to yourself again and again. Then, either scrawl 'n' scan some words in (remembering to keep things legible and clean up bad handwriting), or select the Type tool and tap away. Always choose a font that suits the image.

2 Think about where your characters are. In this case, they're in an abstract, flow-diagram setting but, normally, a big part of your satire depends on where they are and how they interact with their environment. If you're going for simple acerbic portraiture, keep background to a minimum. If you do keep things simple, remember to add a bit of depth. That's what layers are for!

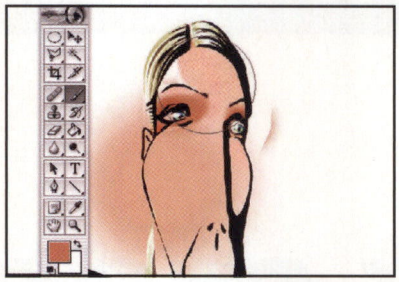
3 By this point you should have started thinking about your colour scheme. You don't want to be roaming over the colour spectrum, and the elements you need to convey identity will usually dictate what your main colours are. Here, there's no getting round that pink dress. A stark monochrome background will add to the impact and focus attention on the figures.

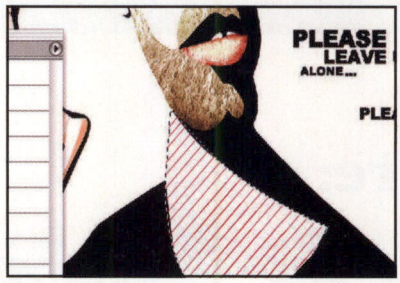
Part 8: Details, details

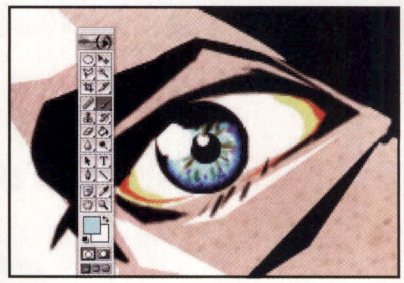
An important part of the process is knowing when to stop...

Practice

Once you've mastered the knack of getting the face right, it's good practice to try and draw a much-caricatured person without overdoing their defining features. Sketching a small-eared Tony Blair with his mouth closed is a great way of sharpening up your skills.



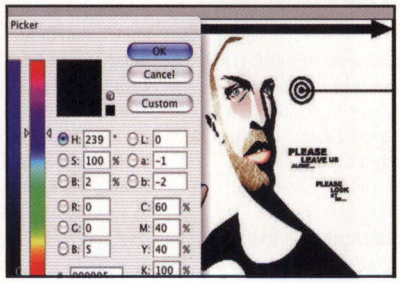


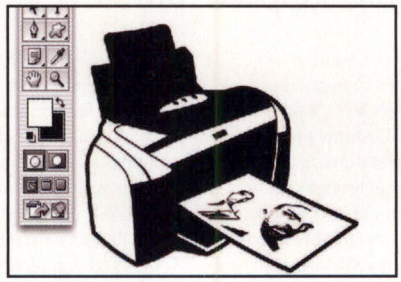


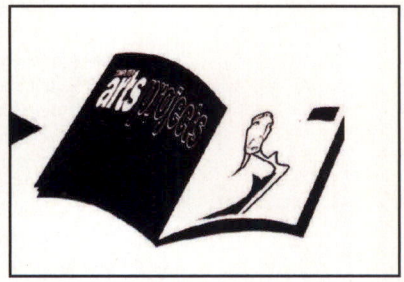
1 Now go back to the faces and paint in any extra contours or colours you might want. A bit of pink in the cheeks serves to accentuate the colour/monochrome contrast. Be careful though; you're probably way too close to the picture by now, and could drive yourself nuts if you don't know when to stop.

2 Using the Pen tool, you can cut sections out of the image to provide 'gaps' for the eye to bridge. It's purely a style thing, but the fun of caricature is in your brain recognising shapes, contextualising images and making connections, so it makes sense to get the eye do a bit of work.

3 Don't forget the details. Reflections and flecks in the pupils, different colours in the lips and graduations of skin tone all serve to highlight the depth of the image.







4 As we're working for print and we've got huge amounts of black, it's a good idea to do a solid colour fill layer and choose a decent 'rich' black which no other colours will show through. Choose Select>Colour Range and sample one of the black areas. C: 60, M: 40, Y: 40, K: 100 works well in CMYK printing.

5 When you're happy with the image, check you're in CMYK (if not, you'll have to do another black layer fill once you've converted) and print out a proof. Remember that most domestic printers are designed to accentuate brightness, so will always distort the colour intensity.

6 When you're happy with the file, flatten it, convert fully to CMYK and file to your editor. Then start thinking about your next victim... ca-p

Illustration: Chris Pepper, [w] www.advocate-art.com

Feature:

Taking stock

Since the mid-90s, the image libraries have made serious inroads into the illustration market and significantly changed the way illustrations are supplied. But at what cost?

For a long time, selling illustrations to magazines and newspapers was a staple way for many illustrators to make a solid living, giving professional artists a steady source of income through regular commissions. In recent years, however, things have changed considerably with fees for editorial work falling year on year in real terms and, in many cases, remaining unchanged since the mid-90s, but why?

Talk to anyone who has been toiling at the illustration coalface for any length of time and the same reasons come up time and time again. According to veteran US illustrator Brad Holland, who remembers *Playboy* magazine paying as much as $1,600 for a double-page illustration 30 years ago, earnings have been stagnating for decades for a number of reasons. In his widely circulated *Honey I Shrunk The Fees* pamphlet, Brad blames the decline on a number of factors including the larger number of graduate artists competing for work, the rise of the semi-professional designer unconcerned about fair prices, the decline of print and the greater use of sourcebooks. Most of all, though, Brad blames the rise of the stock illustration company.

Ready-made illustrations

Exploiting the growth of internet technology and mainly emerging in the US and Europe over the past 10 to 15 years, stock companies quickly tapped into a real need among the world's media for quick access to massive libraries of images, first photography and photo journalism and, more recently, illustrations.

Companies such as Corbis, Digital Vision and others grew quickly and were able to offer magazine and newspaper art editors quick access to ready-made illustrations, eliminating the process of commissioning illustrations from scratch

IMG 77a
ART: Book Cover - Pandora's Box. 2002.
Format: PSD
IMG size: 3000x3000 pixels
Artist: CP, Sheff, SY
Commissioned via: KP Des through Adv A
Contact via e-mail/phone.
Second rights av.

from a network of freelancers. After a sustained period of growth for the stock illustration companies, the long-term effects they have had on the way media outlets go about sourcing illustrations has been felt at all corners of the industry and strongly divides those who make their livings supplying any kind of illustration work.

From a commissioning point of view, Simon Quicke, Editor of Reed Business Information's IT trade weekly *Microscope*, says the process of sourcing illustrations for specific articles on very tight deadlines is often so tricky it's best to go straight to stock houses.

"In my experience, you can commission someone with a very clear idea of what you want and then be quite disappointed with the results," says Simon. "Because of pressures on deadlines there's usually not much of an option to repair the damage. Some illustrations have been paid for and not even used following this sort of problem.

"The biggest problem," Simon continues, "is trying to share an idea with someone who may have never seen the magazine and, even if they have, will not have the same connection with the story or feature that is going to be illustrated."

At National Magazines, Matthew Inman, Art Director on *You & Your Wedding*, says he uses a mix of both commissioned work and images supplied by stock houses. "For more specific articles we would generally commission, because it gives the piece a personal touch and you don't get the impression that you've seen it a thousand times in other magazines," Matthew says. "But sometimes our picture researcher would see an image on the photo library

> "You can commission someone with a very clear idea of what you want and then be quite disappointed" **Simon Quicke**

What image libraries look for...

If you've decided that selling your work to a stock house is a good way of bringing in a regular income, Tim Lund, Creative Director of one of the world's biggest royalty-free image libraries Digital Vision ([w] www.digitalvision.com) says his company is always on the lookout for artists with great ideas, but warns that for illustration to work well for stock purposes, the subject matter needs to be strong.

"For an illustration to sell well, it needs to communicate a message which has broad appeal and relevance as simply and elegantly as possible," says Tim, but it doesn't end there.

"If this message can also be executed with style, wit and sophistication then so much the better. While the image needs to be accessible and easily read, a strong individual style is also very much a positive."

Bryan Michaels (above) and design duo Tado (above right and next page, bottom) have both sold work to stock agency Digital Vision, but Tado believes it's wise to only sell old work rather than new favourites.

sites that would be suitable – it's easier and quicker, although sometimes a little sterile," he adds.

Flexible friends

Although the traditional relationship between editorial departments and

> "Don't sell your existing work or your favourites" **Tado**

illustrators has been eroded by the increased use in stock, Tim Lund, Creative Director at royalty-free image library Digital Vision believes companies like his have introduced a more flexible and efficient way for media outlets to source their images.

"My sense is that, while the bulk of illustrations used in magazines and newspapers are still commissioned from scratch, the increasing availability of high quality, relevant illustrations from stock, does mean its use is on the increase," begins Tim. "However, perhaps just as importantly, the ready availability of illustrations from agencies traditionally associated with photography is bringing this style of creative solution to the attention to a much broader audience."

Along with this flexibility for buyers, stock libraries undoubtedly offer artists a quick and easy way to make money without the headaches of last-minute commissions and vague briefs. Patagonian illustrator Alejandro Levacov has produced a number of illustrations for Digital Vision and says the experience was straightforward and relatively painless.

"The good thing about working for a stock agency is that you don't have to worry about potential clients. You only have to deal with one person, do your job as best as you can and hope to be spread all over the world... and wait for the royalties," Alejandro says.

Similarly Mike and Katie, the creatives behind design group Tado, have sold images to Digital Vision, but advise caution over what type of work to sell to stock houses.

"Stock images are a great way to earn some money, but producing new and original work is the only way to go really. We're not sure how successful stock illustration has been on the whole, but almost everyone we

know survives from their day-to-day work with the stock images bringing in a nice little bonus every now and again. We would say do not sell your existing work or your favourites. Create new work specifically for the stock image library," the pair says.

Market saturation

But despite the attraction of hassle-free income, many illustrators will have nothing to do with selling work to illustration houses. This is a policy that industry group the Association of Illustrators – which represents 1,300 members and campaigns over pay and rights issues – is keen to promote.

"Stock illustration is another factor which is undermining the pricing structure of illustration, which is at present in a pretty

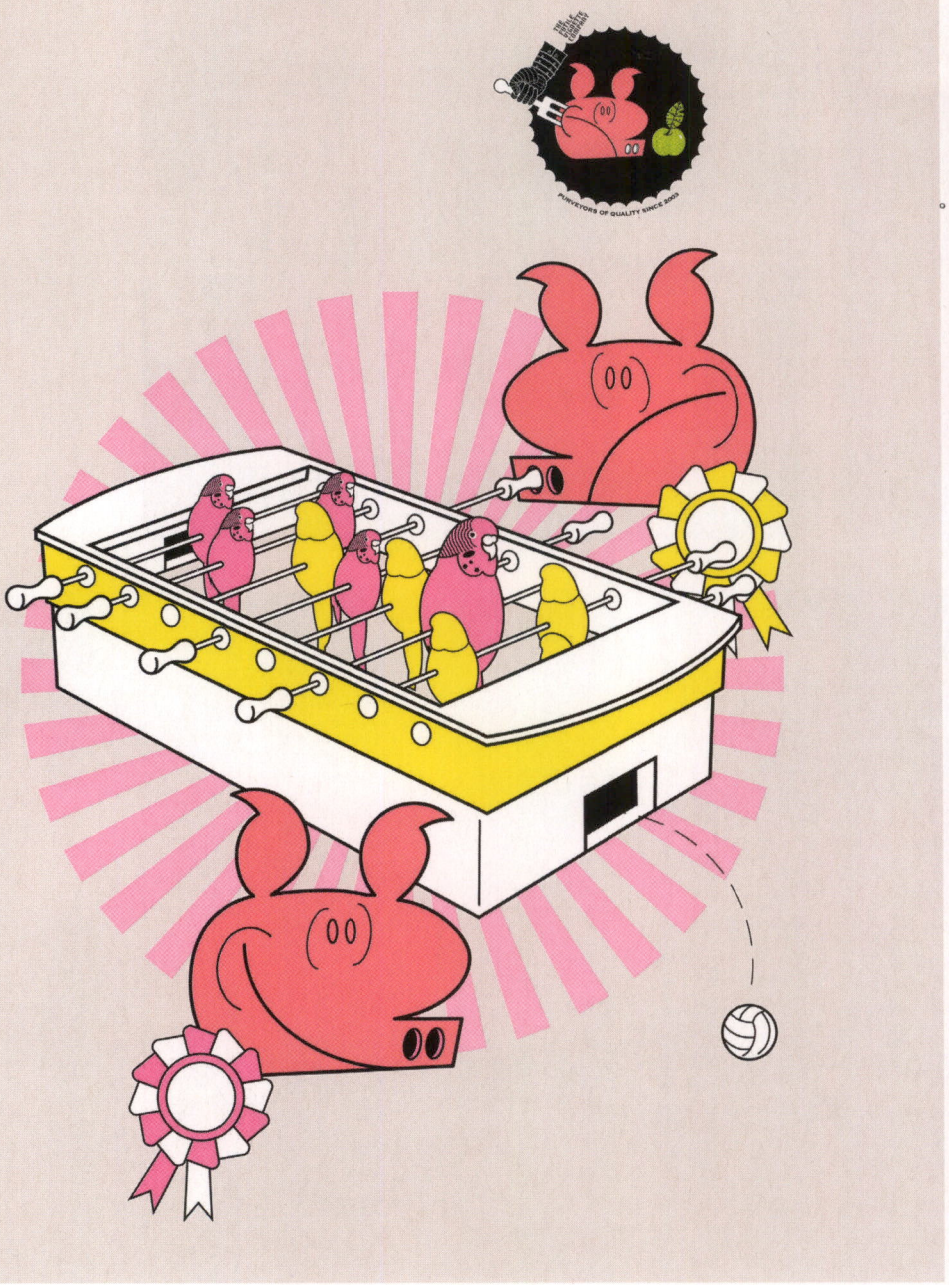
Association of Illustrators advice

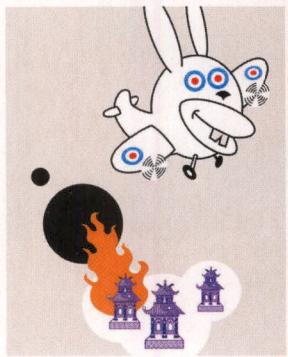
The Association of illustrators ([w] www.theaoi.com) advises its members on a host of issues including pricing, rights and sales. In dealing with stock illustration houses, the organisation says artists need to ensure they're selling licences rather than copyright.

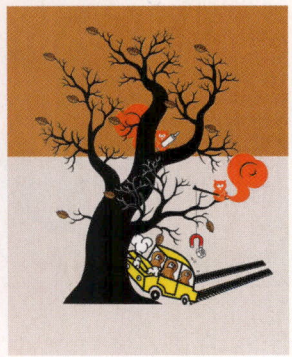
"A licence grants permission to individuals or companies to reproduce your illustration and should specify how it will be used, in what territory, for how long and whether the use will be exclusive or non exclusive," the AOI's Membership Officer Anna Hallam says. "When an artist sells their image for stock, they lose the right to reproduce their own work and can gain no secondary rights income from things like the Design and Artist Copyright Society Payback scheme for photocopying or TV usage.

"Copyright is separate property from artwork and both should be retained by the artist. Original artwork can be sold, but sold or not you will still retain the right to reproduce it," she advises.

Selling work for use in stock libraries is easy, but Digital Vision says only images with very strong content and great visual ideas work well. They'll also need style, wit and sophistication.
Top left: Alejandro Levacov; top right: Paul Oakley; above: Tado.







Mick Marston (above and far right, bottom) believes selling work to stock houses goes against the whole ethos of illustration and devalues the process. Top right: Alejandro Levacov; middle right: Bart.

grim state," the AOI's membership officer Anna Hallam says. "[Stock illustration houses] are asking illustrators and designers to give their copyright away for next to no financial reimbursement, which results in clients needing to commission less as they will have a stock library of illustrations to draw on."

"It's a downward spiral which I believe devalues the work that I do" **Linzie Hunter**

For illustrator Linzie Hunter, there are obvious attractions in selling work to stock libraries, but she does not believe these outweigh the potentially damaging long-term effects. "If you're a digital illustrator, it's all too easy to upload your work to a stock site rather than hoof your portfolio round town or chase up commissioned work," Linzie says.

"I have refused all offers to do this. It's a downward spiral which I believe devalues the work that I do. You can hardly complain about the amount of consumer publications choosing to use stock, if you're one of the people helping to saturate the market," she warns.

Strictly fair? No, says Digital Vision's Tim Lund who defends his company's business model by pointing out that it pays a "royalty each and every time a licence is sold."

But for Mick Marston, another illustrator who is determined to make a living from illustration without selling work to stock libraries, the dissatisfaction with stock goes way beyond the buying and selling of images and closer to the heart of the creative process.

"The use of generic concepts to illustrate an article or magazine cover goes against my whole ethos of illustrator as creative thinker and problem solver. A good illustrator should be much more than a stylist," Mick says.

While stock illustration companies will clearly continue to play a significant role in the way in which magazines and newspapers source illustrations into the future, the artists producing the creative work itself are likely to remain, at best, ambivalent. **ca-p**

See more work at **[w]** www.digitalvision.com, **[w]** www.bradholland.net, **[w]** www.mikiluv.com, **[w]** www.alejandrolevacov.com, **[w]** www.tado.co.uk, **[w]** www.linziehunter.co.uk.

CALL FOR ENTRIES
GRADUATE SHOWCASE 2005

Put your work under the spotlight and ensure it's seen by thousands of people worldwide

Will you be graduating this year? Would you like an effective way to showcase all your hard work? Well, we've got some fantastic news for graduating students across the UK – *Computer Arts* is making an official call for entries to its ninth annual *Graduate Showcase*.

Each year, we sift through thousands of images submitted by design graduates from courses covering everything from illustration to new media, graphic design to 3D animation, and choose the best examples to be included in our impressive *Graduate Showcase*.

The *Graduate Showcase* is seen by thousands of people within the creative industry every year. Not only is it included with copies of the mag sold at the UK newsstand, it's also mailed to all our subscribers worldwide. How's that for exposure?

This year's theme is Best of British, so only entries from UK graduates will be considered. Good luck!

ILLUSTRATION: ROB LINDSTROM

HOW TO ENTER

Entering couldn't be easier. Simply complete the submission form*, which can be downloaded from our website at **www.computerarts.co.uk**, and send it with a CD containing your best work to us at this address:

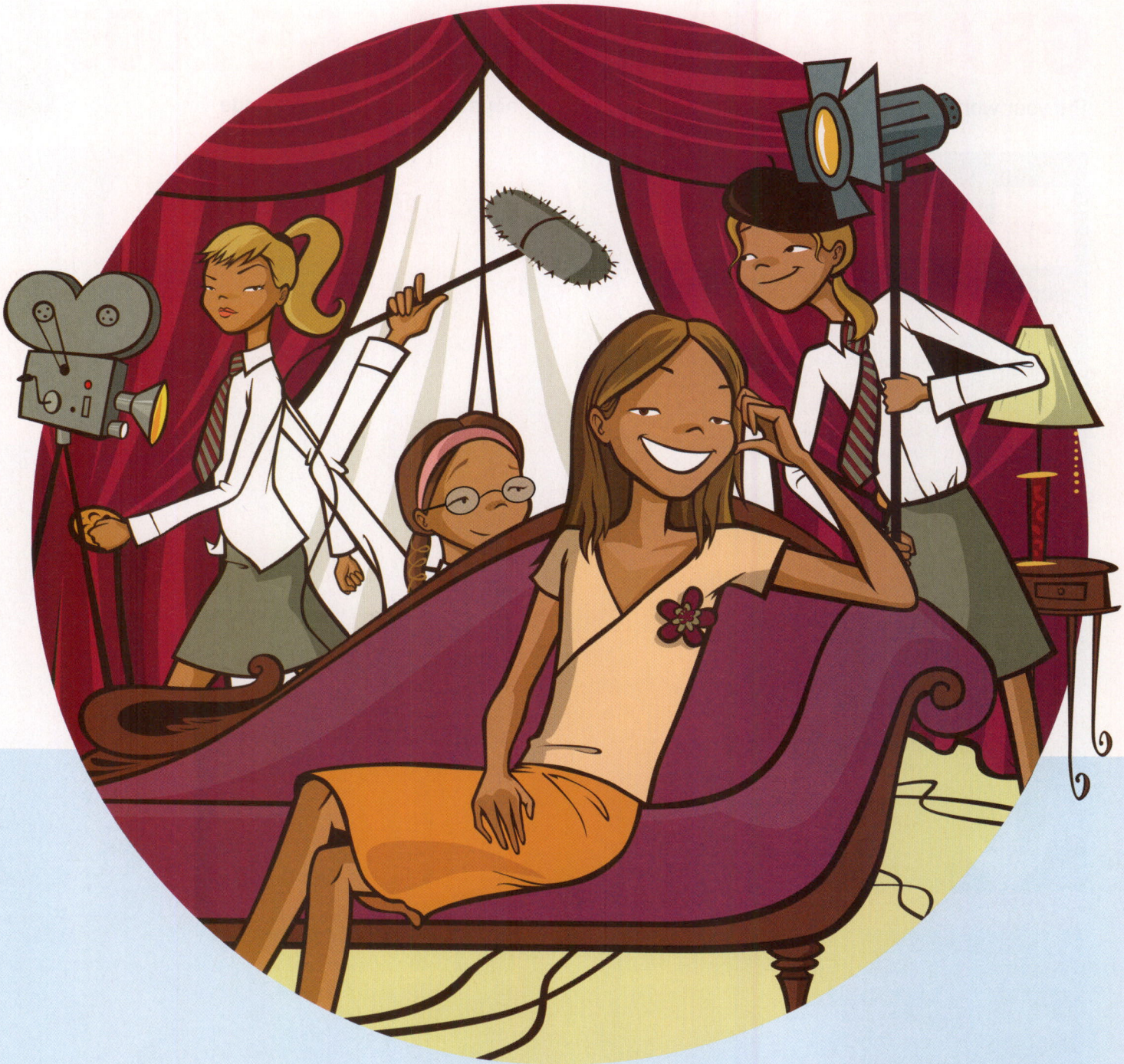
Graduate Showcase, *Computer Arts*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

If you want us to return your work, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

*Your submission MUST be accompanied by a completed submission form.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND DOWNLOAD THE FORM!

DEADLINE: FRIDAY 22 APRIL 2005



Feature:

Children's book illustration

Illustrating for kids' books can be rewarding and entertaining – but just how do you go about getting started in the first place?

While J.K. Rowling may be the current darling of the children's book world, every generation has its favourite author – be it Roald Dahl or C.S. Lewis. Chances are, though, your fond memories of that Dahl book are inextricably entwined with Quentin Blake's distinctive illustrations.

A good children's book illustrator can put their mark onto a story forever, bringing it to life in a way that the text alone might not achieve. For educational and non-fiction books, images can play an even greater role in hammering the message home.

One of the attractions of book illustration is that it gives you much more scope for creativity than, say, a magazine article. Deciding which parts of the story to depict, in what style, is obviously a crucial element of any commission, and one of the most fun.

For younger children's books, which may consist almost entirely of images with a few words on each page, the publisher and author usually decide on the general layout and tone. But for books with a substantial amount of text, most illustrators agree it's simply a case of using your own discretion.

Readers will spontaneously form their own images of particular characters or situations in a well-written book, and the same approach is used by the artist. The publisher and art team may also provide suggested style ideas and page layouts, depending on the book's format and subject matter.

Keeping it fresh

Jackie Snider is a US-based illustrator who has worked both with watercolours and digital media. "This is a visual business, so when I read a manuscript, hopefully I have lots of images dancing in my head before I put pencil to paper," she says. "Lately I've been looking at photo reference of objects or subjects to give myself a fresh outlook on a story, rather than relying on the same old things that pop out of my head. After almost 20 years of illustrating, one has to keep ideas flowing, so looking at photos helps to refresh my perspective on the world. There is limited room in my head for endless new versions of dogs, cats and kids!"

Asa Andersson, who mainly illustrates children's educational books, also relies on inspiration. "I would always have a picture in my head before I start the actual illustration," she says. "I'll read the text and different pictures will spring to my mind as a certain part of the story inspires me."

Perhaps most surprising to someone not in the field is the amount of contact between author and illustrator – or rather the lack of it. Except in a few exceptional cases, where an author may have worked extensively with the illustrator in the past, there's generally very little collaboration between the two.

Following a brief

Effectively, the book or story itself serves as the commission, and the specifics of ›

Above: Nicola Slater's cover designs for the hugely popular *Princess Diaries* series of books, which is aimed at teenage girls. Copyright 2005, Macmillan Children's Books.

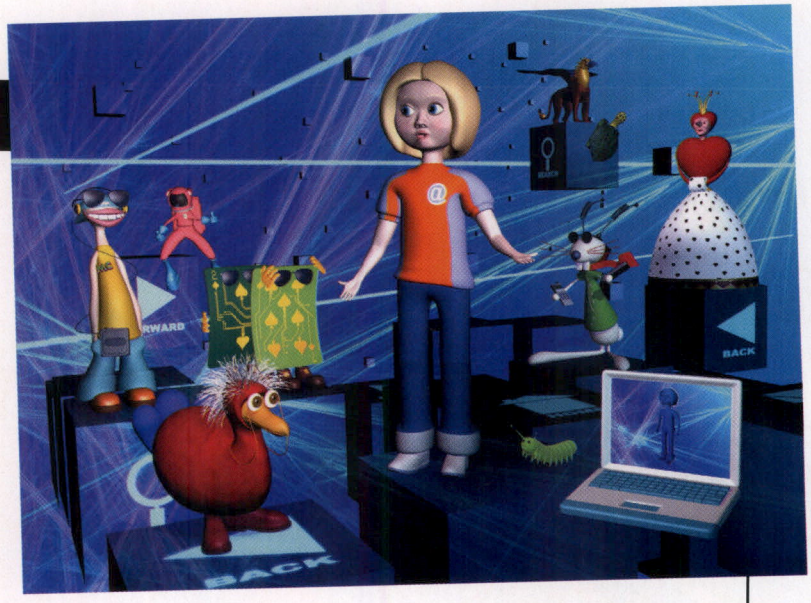
Opposite page: Another *Princess Diaries* cover illustration created by Nicola Slater. Copyright 2005, Hodder.

Springing off the page

Philip Nicolson's work proves that book illustrations don't necessarily have to be in the traditional bold-line, 2D format: he chooses to work entirely in 3D. When he began in 1987, a Mac was just another string to his bow. "Being an illustrator in Sweden at that time, you were required to be very versatile – some days doing watercolour, some days airbrush, some days line drawings, so I saw the computer as just another style to work with."

Philip would draw in *Illustrator* and colour in *Photoshop*, until he bought *Strata 3D*: "It was a while before I dared do a real job using it since it was such a different approach to what I had been doing." Nowadays, he produces exclusively digital media and mostly 3D images for the likes of Lego books (a product particularly suited to 3D).

"To be honest, though, one of my favourite artists is still the Japanese airbrush illustrator Masao Saito," Philip admits. "I don't know if he's still going, but his style made a big impression on me when I was airbrushing."



Philip progressed from pen and ink to digital media to 3D imagery. Right: Alice in Cyberspace for BBC Educational Publishing. Below: Lego book illustrations.

character design and setting are a natural part of the creative process. However, an illustrator will often collaborate with the publisher's own art editor or team, particularly if they're new to the field.

"I rarely communicate with authors," says Jackie. "Never in educational or magazine work, and seldom in trade [commercial] books. Mostly I am left to my own devices, since I have a large portfolio showing a consistent style and my clients are familiar with my work. Sometimes I'm provided with rough layout sketches or written outlines of illustration content, but primarily I'm given manuscripts and page layouts and allowed to interpret the content myself."

Of course, processes vary from publisher to publisher. Nicola Slater illustrated the covers of the British editions of *The Princess Diaries*, and her distinctive style appears in many other children's books.

"More often than not, the brief for a project contains items which have specifically been picked out by the author or art editor from the book, which will be important to help support the story," she says. "Discussions about the book will typically involve how to make it work and flow visually, how the text will fit around the illustrations or visa versa, the kind of palette to suit, and so on."

Digital techniques

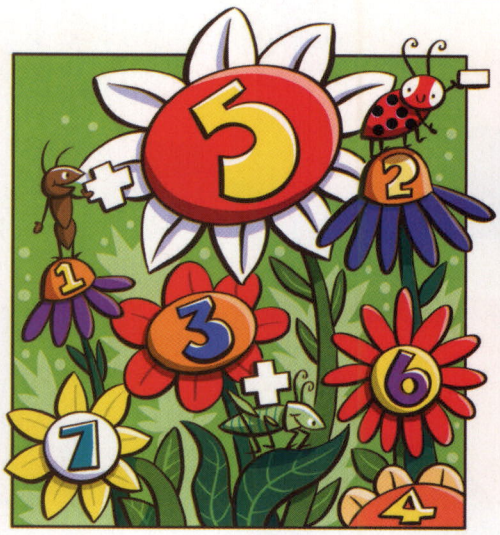
Many book illustrators have turned to digital production for the obvious convenience and freedom it provides, but some feel more comfortable beginning with traditional techniques. "I still do my rough sketches in pencil on tracing paper," says Jackie Snider. "I think better that way. I scan the pencils and send JPEGs for approval. Then I use these as templates for the finals. If the client produces PDFs with my sketches placed in position with the text, I'll use these as templates to make sure my spacing is accurate."

Jackie switched from watercolours to using *Illustrator* on a G4 three years ago, and says she still has a lot to learn. "I'm starting to enjoy using transparent layers and have done some work with gradients, but since my painting style was fairly flat colour I have tended to stay true to that look for now as I make the transition to the new medium.

"I use a Wacom tablet because it enables me to have a line that mimics the pen-and-ink style of my watercolour illustrations," continues Jackie. "When I made the transition to digital art, the hardest thing was choosing a palette. After playing around with too many colours at first I managed to narrow my swatches down to about 20 colours."

Nicola Slater also sketches roughs, either on paper or in *Painter*: "I then place the sketch in Adobe *Illustrator* and make it into a template. From that I can work up the entire illustration. I mostly use *Painter, Illustrator* and *Photoshop*, though the latter is mainly used for scanning and cleaning up a sketch."

Asa Andersson takes a different approach, drawing directly in *Photoshop*. She says this is mainly because she creates



Above: Jackie Snider's work is aimed mainly at younger children and the educational markets. (From left to right) *Flash Skills: Writing Skills* and *Flash Skills: Math Drills*, both published by Spark Publishing/Barnes and Noble; *Chirp* published by Bayard Press.

Left: Educational book illustrations by Asa Andersson for Cambridge University Press.

animations as well as print illos: "In animation it would take forever to do pencil sketches first. Even for print I think it's a lot faster and easier to touch up a digital image.

Asa continues: "I work directly in *Flash, Illustrator* or *Photoshop* depending on the look and feel I want. If I want a sketchy style, I would draw it in *Flash* or *Photoshop*; but if I'm after a more 'worked at' effect then I would draw it in *Illustrator*."

Children's book illustrations, with their bright colour and often spontaneous, flowing style, may seem more suited to natural media. Indeed, many illustrators still work with traditional materials, such as Axel Scheffler (of *The Gruffalo* fame).

But a switch to digital tools usually means a change to working practices rather than style. "Both methods produce pretty much the same effect," explains Nicola. "But I certainly have to be much more disciplined and methodical when it comes to digital artwork. Working in *Illustrator*, you have to plan the picture carefully beforehand, leaving little or no room for experimentation once you start the artwork."

"There is a softness to watercolour that I cannot recreate in *Illustrator*," admits Jackie. "Possibly, if I worked in *Photoshop* I might be able to come closer to that look, but I have adapted to the differences and started to use the cut-and-paste feel of *Illustrator* to enhance my work."

Digital media has become as much a part of book illustration as in any other field. What hasn't changed is the creativity and mindset required to be an effective illustrator. Kids don't care if you used a pencil or *Photoshop* — but if you can capture their imagination, the chances are you'll have a fan for life. ca-p

Nicola Slater and Philip Nicolson can be contacted via Thorogood Illustration, **[t]** 020 8859 7507, **[w]** www.thorogood.net. Asa Andersson is available through NB Illustration, **[t]** 020 7278 9131, **[w]** www.nbillustration.co.uk. See more of Jackie Snider's work at **[w]** www.jackiesnider.com.

I wanna tell you a story

Many illustrators harbour the ambition to illustrate a children's book. While it might seem like an interesting diversion from your day job, and perhaps a shot at everlasting glory, it's not just a case of bashing out some zany illos and waiting for the fame.

First, the timescale of book production is much longer than Web or print design. In those areas you might, if you're lucky, have a month's lead time till your deadline. Book production, however, stretches over months if not years, so you should be prepared to be patient.

Thinking like a child is also important, and not just for the author. The ability to recognise and illustrate those scenes which a young reader might imagine when reading the story will improve with practice. And, of course, you'll need to do a lot of research. Check out a range of books — both current and classic — to see what works and what doesn't. Real feedback from real kids is also invaluable.

Designing for kids

Explore specific tools, functions and processes within *FreeHand* to create simple shapes, objects and characters for a children's poster...

So it's time to brighten up your little one's room. What better way than with your own piece of creative work that can be enlarged to any size you want. In this tutorial, we'll explain how to create a vector-based image in *FreeHand* that will scale up easily. We'll also show you how the Xtra Tools work and can be applied to create simple or complicated objects.

This will enable you to use *FreeHand* as a creative drawing tool. You'll be able to explore more of its features on simple, effective and directed tasks and be rewarded with limitless possibilities for building and having more fun with it.

In addition, we'll show you how to use primary and bespoke shapes, colour, and positive and negative space to add depth, fun and puzzle qualities to the work. At the end of it all, you should have plenty of starting points for creating your own images in *FreeHand*.

By combining these approaches with handy and effective processes and tips, you should have a good set of building blocks that will give you the confidence to go and make your own playworld.

Expertise provided by Ginzberg, **[e]** ginzberg@ntlworld.com.

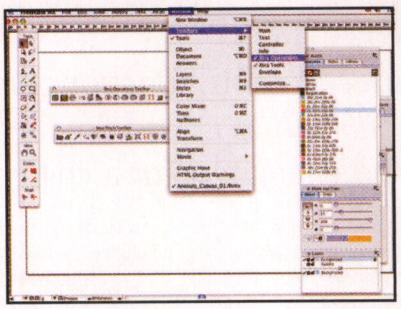
The DrawnLines_01.tif file needed to complete this tutorial can be found on this month's CD in the Software\Tutorial\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Kid's poster folder.

Part 1: Xtra Tools

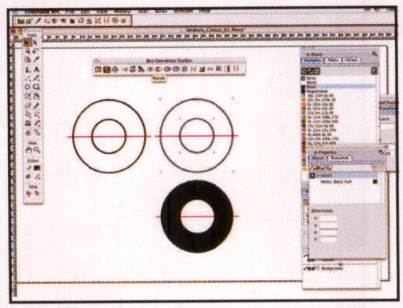
Discover *FreeHand's* Xtra Tools and Operation palettes...

FreeHand preferences

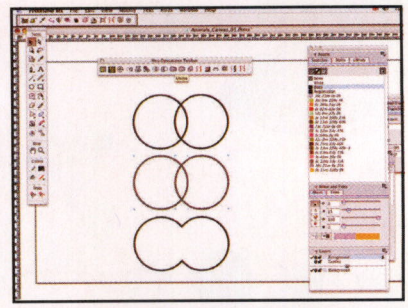
Start with good working practices in *FreeHand* by setting certain preferences that will help no end with the application. Under FreeHand MX, go to Preferences>General, and set your number of undos to at least 25. Under Object, click on 'Groups transform as units by default'. This means all grouped objects going through any transform do it together rather than shift around as can happen otherwise. Finally, under Redraw, click on 'Display Overprintable Objects'. This normally only comes up when type is turned to paths but it's always worth having on.



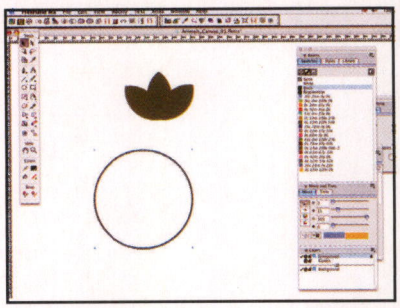
1 Many of the elements within the image canvas are made by using geometric and simple shapes. These are built using functions within the Xtra Operations toolbar and Xtra Tools. You'll find these under Window>Toolbars. Once selected they'll appear as a toolbar and can be dragged and docked at the top of your document.



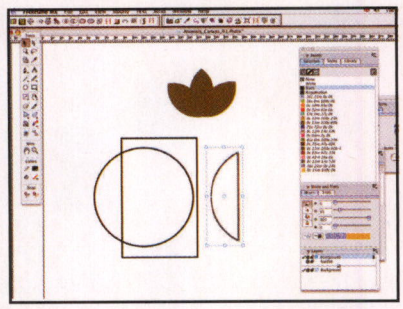
2 One of the most useful functions within the Xtra Tools is the Punch tool. It enables you to 'punch' one shape through another to create a solid object. This is handy when you want to create bespoke shapes or objects that can be 'looked through' and develop the sense of depth.



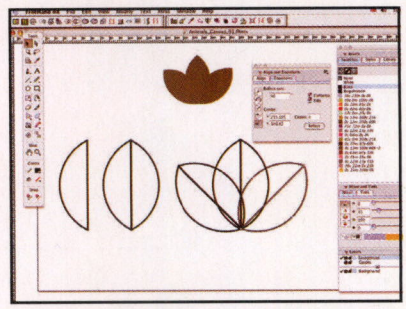
3 The next useful function is the Union tool. You can use this to 'union' objects together to create a single bespoke object made of one single path. It will become one your handiest tools. Be warned though: once unioned there is no way to 'un-union' the object, so always work with duplicates of the original shapes.



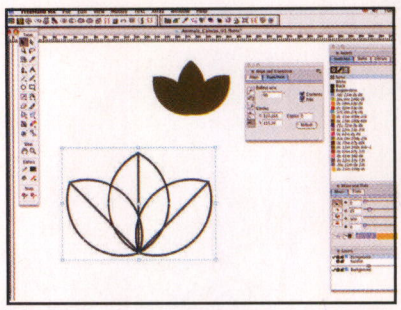
4 You can also use the Punch tool to make bespoke objects. Here's how to make the leaf shape using six repeated and positioned elements. First, draw a circle, hold Shift to constrain its proportions from a corner point or Alt+Shift to hold it around a centre point. By using a circle as your basis, you begin with a pure arc.



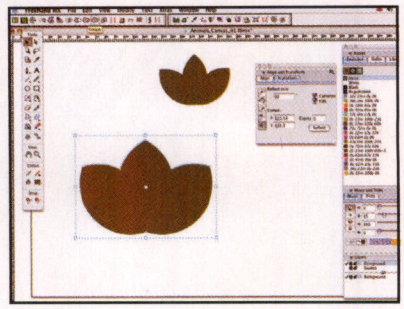
5 To give the leaf its 'point' you need to cut down the circle. Draw a box, positioned over the circle past its centre point. The more you cover, the sharper the shape will eventually be. Select both shapes (you're using the box as a cutter) and then click on the Union function to get a closed segment shape. Whatever you use as the cutter, ensure it's in front of the shape being punched.



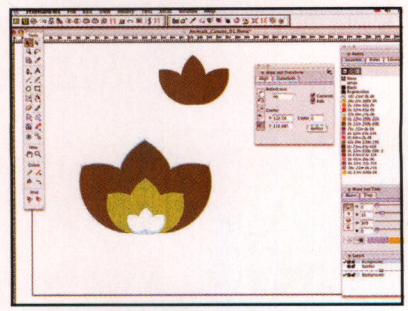
6 Clone the segment (Ctrl/Cmnd+[+]), flip it 90 degrees in the Reflect palette and position it so the two straight edges are against each other and slightly overlapping. Then clone these two shapes and rotate them 45 degrees. This can be done in the Rotate palette or by double-clicking on the object to access the Transform function and holding Shift while rotating. Now clone and reflect these shapes again and position them on the other side.



7 Once you're happy with their position, select all six shapes. Then select the Union tool. It's worth noting that both the Punch and Union tools only work on shapes that are closed paths. Also, for the Union tool to work, the shapes you want to join need to be overlapping. It will still union the shapes, but only in the same way as the Join function does.



8 You should now have one complete closed object. Because you've made everything from the same initial shape and have constrained its positioning, you'll be left with a good geometric shape that you can fill and work with as you like. This is one of the simple joys of using *FreeHand* to create objects.



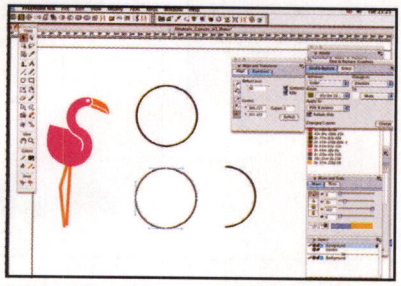
9 Clone the first leaf shape, reduce it by 50 per cent and then position its base over the first leaf. Colour it as you wish, but bear in mind that a brighter colour helps to suggest blooming. Now repeat this step with the second leaf shape and colour it white giving the impression that it's been punched through. Using these tools will help you appreciate unioned and punched effects.

Part 2: Creating animal shapes

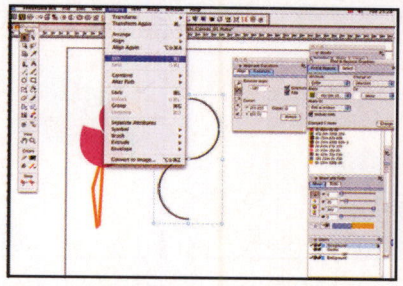
Make shapes by using outlines and the Union and Punch tools...

Resources

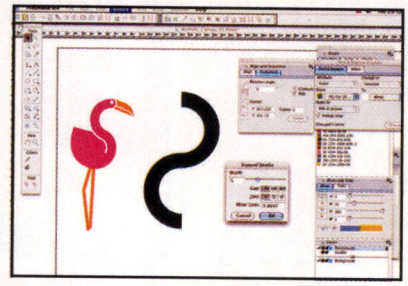
Make good use of every available source of inspiration, resource and reference point. Use Google's image search feature, go to car boot sales looking for unusual reference books, and keep a scrapbook of images you like. Also check out National Geographic for great photography (you can find copies at most secondhand bookshops for next to nothing). The more image resources you have, the easier it should be to come up with creative concepts.



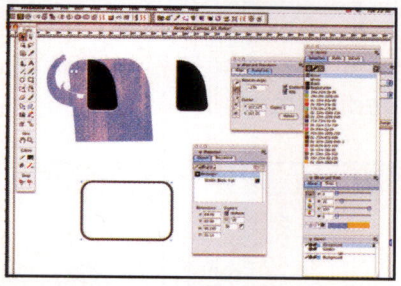
1 The flamingo's smooth neck began life as a circle. Draw a circle and ungroup it (Ctrl/Cmnd+U). You'll now see that the circle is made up of four Bézier points that define its arcs. Select the left-hand side arcs by clicking on them while holding down Alt+Shift. Now delete them and you'll be left with a semi-circle as just a path.



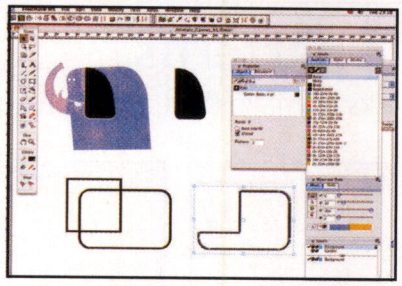
2 Clone the path and rotate it 180 degrees, positioning it so its top point connects with the bottom point of the first arc. Select both paths then Join them. You'll find the Join function under the Modify menu, or simply use Ctrl/Cmnd+J. You'll now have one continuous path.



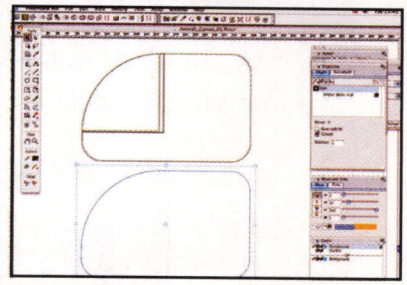
3 It's just an open path at the moment and you want it to be transformed into a solid shape. With the path selected go to Modify>Alter Path>Expand Stroke. You now have a palette where you can set the thickness of the line. Choose a Width of 5, press OK and you'll see the path expands to form a solid shape.



4 Creatures are not entirely regular things. To give them character you need to create more individual shapes. The elephant is made more or less from the same base shape but it's been tweaked at certain points. Start by drawing a box. Then, in the Object palette, choose a radius for the corners.



5 Draw a second box over the top-left corner and punch this through. This cut now leaves you with a chunk missing that you need to patch up with a segment from a circle. This gives you a much broader arc on one corner.



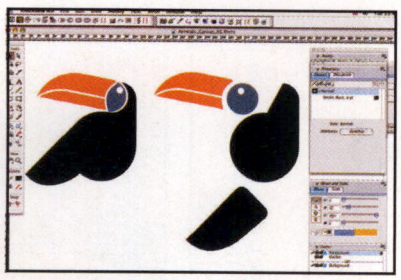
6 Draw a circle, punch it with two boxes and you're left with the top-left quadrant. Scale and position this so it fits exactly over your first shape's missing chunk. Flipping into Keyline mode (Ctrl/Cmnd+K) will help to align it precisely. Select both objects and union them. If you have any wayward points, hold Alt as you click and delete them.

Part 3: Toucan parts

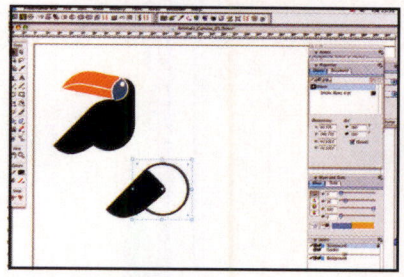
Flat shapes can be arranged with inset paths to create depth...

The right customer

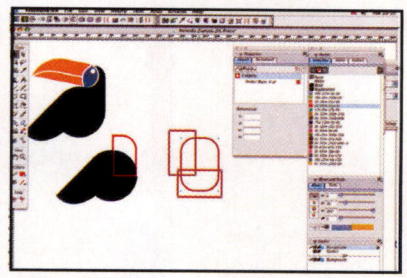
Think about who you're producing the work for. If it's for kids then simple is best, so give them easily recognisable shapes they can identify. Use visual building blocks as you would give them physical ones to play with. Also, they don't have to be shown everything as we expect it – let their imagination have something to work with and you'll keep their interest. Also, think about one or two gestures which define a creature and will bring it to life.



1 The toucan character is made from a total of seven flat objects: a few circles, the elephant ear you just made and some expanded objects. It's just their arrangement that gives the illusion of depth and movement. You'll be using the Inset path tool to help give extra definition to objects and let it do the work.



2 Using the previous ear shape, rotate it so it sits at 45 degrees. Select the end points and, holding Shift, drag them diagonally upwards to elongate the shape but not distort it. Now draw a circle to form the main body. Always try to think of how curves run into one another, and using simple primary shapes to begin with really does help.

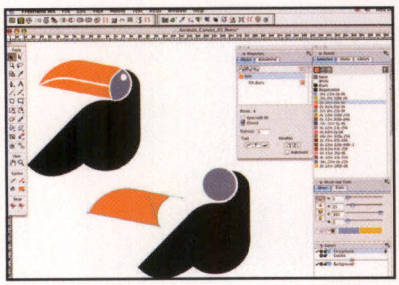


3 Now you need to get the craning motion into the body. First, draw a box with rounded corners. Using two other boxes, punch two of its edges off so that you're left with a box with only one rounded corner. Position this to fit. If you need to edit its shape, remember to only alter the straight edges otherwise you'll start distorting the curve.

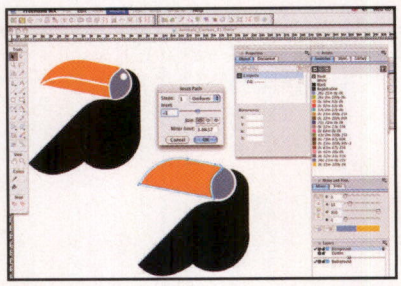
Toucan parts continued...

Large format

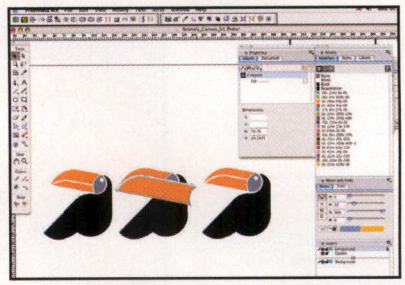
Impact is everything. If you're going big, do it in style. Don't get bogged down in detail unless it's necessary. Working to a max of A3/300dpi is okay whatever size it's enlarged to. Also, vector artwork will always be sharp when scaled up, but be prepared for pixelation on images. If it's for a canvas, remember to allow for the stretcher, and consider whether you want white edges or the image to run around the sides.



4 For the face, draw a circle to fit in the space. Clone it and then reduce it slightly around its centre point. The amount you reduce this will define the white line given to the finished creature. Colour the first circle white and the second grey. The beak is made from the ear shape again, only this time drag the handles to create an arc back on itself.



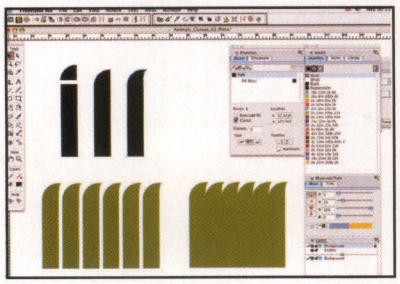
5 Once you're happy with the beak shape, select and clone it. Now go to Modify>Alter Path> Inset Path. This palette enables you to control and give an irregular object an Inset or Expanded shape. Play with it to get the correct outline to match your Toucan's neckline. This tool is very useful if you wish to add one or multiple outlines to an object that are actual solid shapes rather than stroke thickness.



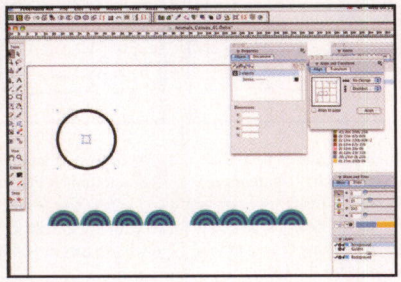
6 Clone the beak shape and position it so its top arc hits over the point of the beak. Colour this one white. Now clone this, colour it with the same beak orange and position it slightly lower, again trying to match the white defining line you're building. Now select both of these new beak shapes, cut them (Ctrl/Cmnd+X), select the original beak shape and Paste Inside (Ctrl/Cmnd+Shift+V).

Part 4: Geometric patterns

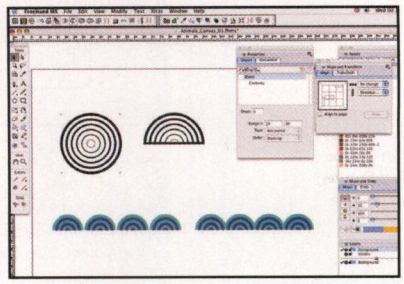
Create some simple building blocks to make fluid and complicated patterns...



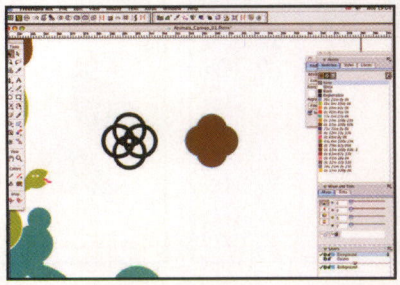
1 For the tall grass, use a tall box and a quadrant from a circle. Position them to overlap and union them. Now drag out the top point to the right to give it a flick. Clone this shape, position it to the right in the place you require and, providing you haven't done any further actions, press Ctrl/ Cmnd+D and the previous actions will be duplicated.



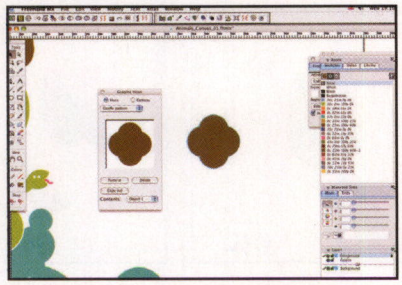
2 Now you need to create the repeating effect of the wave pattern. The Blend tool is useful for getting shapes to repeat in a concentric manner. Draw a circle, clone it and scale it down around its centre point. You want to make the smaller circle roughly the size you'd want the line thickness to be.



3 Select both and go to the Blend tool in the Xtra Operations toolbar. This creates concentric steps between the two objects. In the Object Inspector edit the number of steps to four. Ungroup this object and then ungroup the inner blend. Now you have a range of shapes created equally. Punch through them with one box, colour as required and position to create a simple but effective pattern.



4 The Graphic Hose tool works like a spray can that you fill with your own objects. First, make the object that you're going to use for the giraffe patterning. Draw a circle, clone it and move it almost entirely beneath the first one. Select both, clone them, then rotate 90 degrees. Select all four circles and union them to get a curved/cross shape.

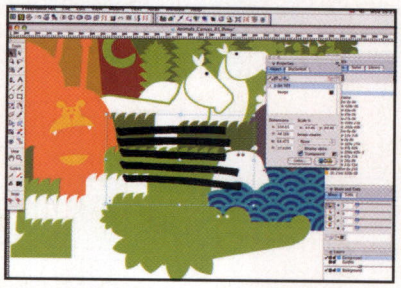


5 Copy this object, then double-click on the Graphic Hose tool in the Xtra Tools palette. This accesses its preferences palette where you can add the objects to be used and control the hose's features. In its dropdown menu select New and entitle it 'Giraffe pattern'. Now click on Paste In and your shape will be pasted into its library.

6 Click on Options and you can now set the parameters (either random or ordered) that you wish the hose to work with. We've set the Spacing to Variable and Loose. We've also set the Scaling to Random and reducing. Now you can spray away. You can always go back and edit the tool's parameters until you get what you're after.

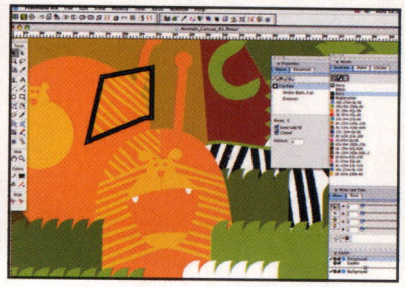
Part 5: Hand-drawn elements

Use *FreeHand* to add real textures and elements to your illustration...



1 Import DrawnLines_01.tif from CD70. It's a greyscale TIFF of hand-drawn lines that has been bitmapped in *Photoshop*. *FreeHand* handles these extremely well and gives you great creative freedom. First, go to the Object Inspector and switch on the Transparent option. Now everything white has disappeared, leaving just the black.

2 You're now going to paste this inside a shape. Position the image as you desire. Select it and cut it (Ctrl/Cmnd+X). Now select the shape you wish it to be inside. Then use Ctrl/Cmnd+Shift+V to paste the image inside the shape.



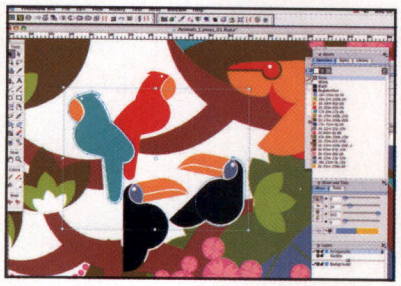
3 With Paste Inside commands you can Paste Inside a Paste Inside. For the lion, the angle of the lines is used to help define its movement. Draw a bespoke box to effectively crop the image. Cut it and Paste Inside. Now you can paste this inside a master shape. Repeat, edit the box's shape position or colouring, or transform the image as you like.

Part 6: Colouring and positioning

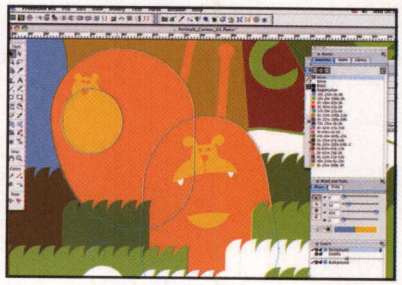
Use clever colouring and precise positioning to help define shapes and space...

FreeHand plus points

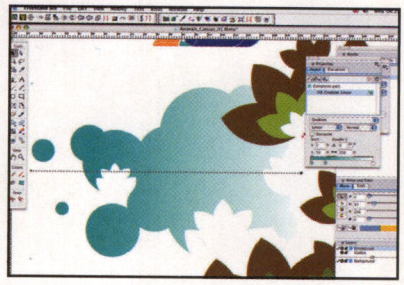
Once you start using *FreeHand* you'll soon get to grips with its ease and flexibility. It's excellent at creating vector graphics and also enables you to incorporate bitmaps successfully. Learn all the basic key commands and you'll be amazed at how quickly and efficiently you can build. Use Clone (Apple+[+]) to get an exact copy in the same place and Apple+Shift+V for the Paste Inside option. If you've only just swapped from *FH9* to *FHMX* then go to the Edit menu, where you can swap the key commands back to 9 or set up new ones for yourself.



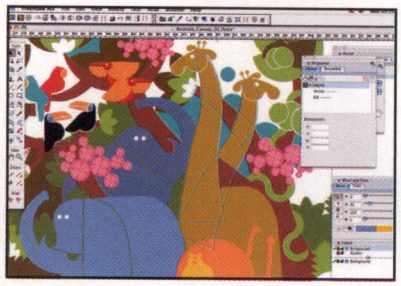
1 When you have multiple similar objects, you sometimes need to define them. If you want one object to appear as if it's in front of another, use an inset path as you would an outline.



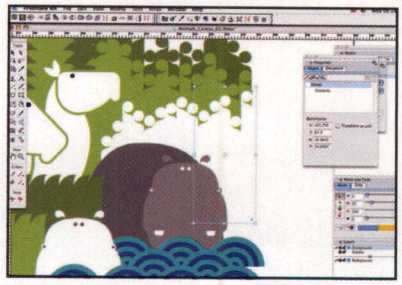
2 Positioning objects in the 'from back to front' order is important. This way, shapes can be positioned to overlap and run in front or behind other objects so they appear to inhabit a 3D space. You can Send to Back (Ctrl/Cmnd+B), Bring to Front (Ctrl/Cmnd+F) and step objects forwards and backwards in order (Ctrl/Cmnd+[/] respectively).



3 Using a gradient will always give a greater sense of depth. Go to the Object Inspector and from the dropdown menu select Gradient. Choose a start colour and a finish colour and *FreeHand* handles the colour blend in-between. You can add more colours and their position to make more complicated fills or use the Radial Gradient for a highlight spot.



4 Because you're making creatures using simple shapes that are probably common throughout your piece, objects will sit together comfortably. Also, if you use simple shapes as the building blocks, they tend to flow into one another much better, and if you do want to make a more complicated element then use simple transforms and repeats.



5 Think about how you can define space. Use white space cleverly. Don't always assume an image has to be filled to the edges; sometimes you can let the background help define space and depth. Also think about how patterns work, ie. how shapes can tessellate together to create extra qualities.

6 Finally, think about what shapes really define an object, and bear in mind that sometimes the simplest solutions are best. Once you've brought everything together, all that remains is to hope that your kids like it! ca-p

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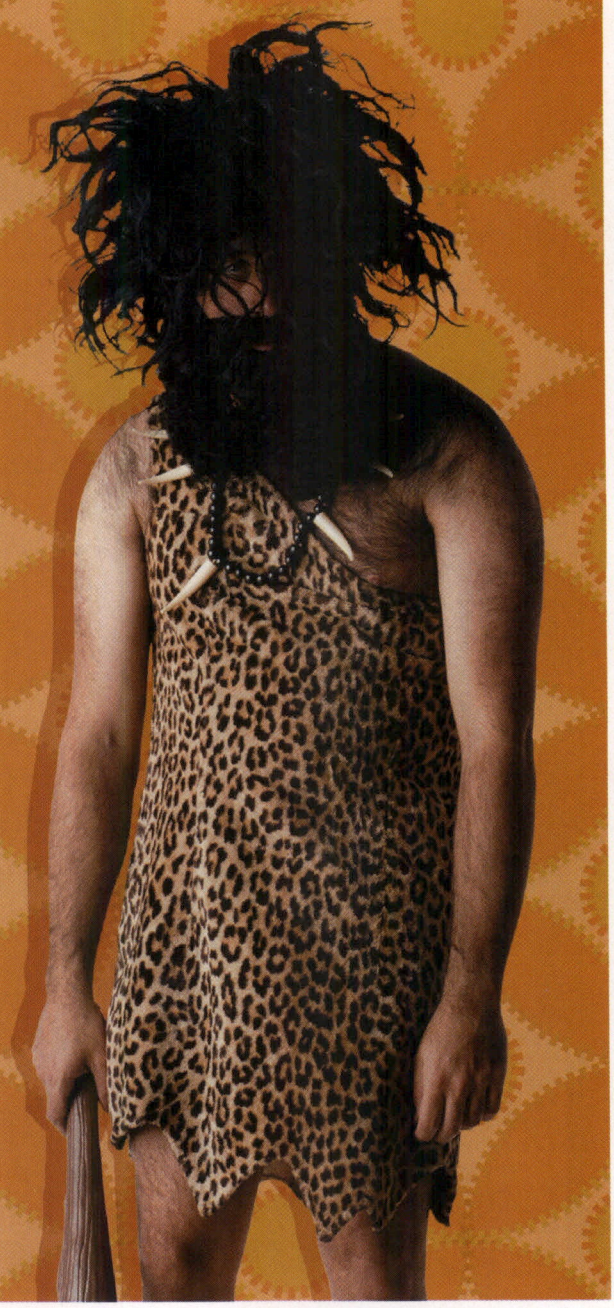

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Illustration : Kristian Russell

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Illustrator plug-ins
On this month's CD you'll find demos of such handy plug-ins as *Path Styler Pro*, *3D Invigorator* and a selection from graphicxtras.com

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FREE ILLUSTRATIONS!

An amazing bundle of stock illustrations worth over $3,580!

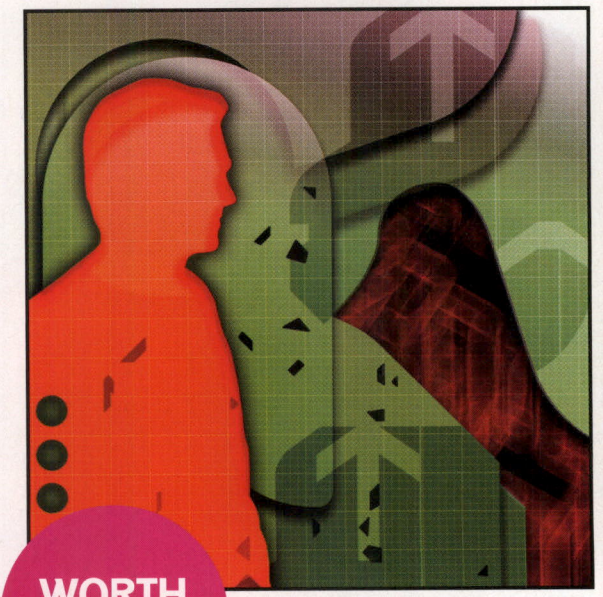
Amazing free imagery for your projects

This month we bring you a massive stock illustration resource, worth an equally massive $3,582! First up, there's a bundle of 12 images from IMAGEZOO. These illustrations, worth $2,268, can be used in your commercial work and are great for adding backdrops or final details to illustrative work. There's a selection of EPS files on the CD, meaning you can use the images for high-resolution projects.

Next, there's 15 images from Urban CGI. This new stock illustration company has generously provided us with $1,485-worth of cool illustrations for you to use in your creative projects. Check out the company's website for more.

Finally, we bring you a selection of images from the Art Parts CD collection, worth $99. You could take these black-and-white woodcut-style images into *Illustrator* and colourise them if you wished.

As well as this, there's a sample from Art Bitz's collection of EPS illustrations. All of the images on the CD are high quality, and are bound to save you a huge amount of time when putting together mock-ups or finished illustrations. Enjoy.



WORTH $3,582!

More info... www.imagezoo.com, www.urbancgi.com, www.artparts.com, www.artbitz.com

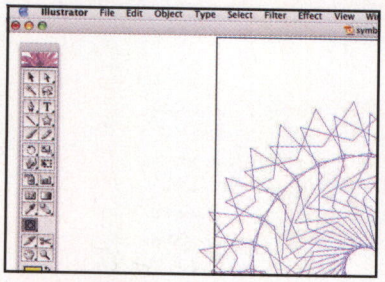
Illustrator plug-ins and resources

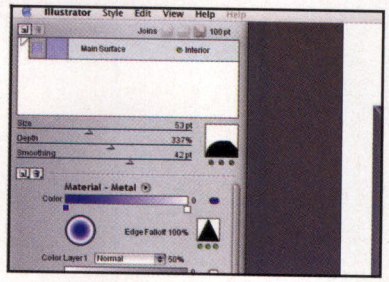
Push *Illustrator* and *FreeHand* that little bit further with this carefully selected collection of handy add-ons...

If you've ever wanted to take your vector applications further, we have a resource of plug-ins for you to try. First, there's a 30-day demo of *Path Styler Pro*. With this nifty *Illustrator* plug-in, you can create stunning bevelled surfaces and materials – which would be incredibly tricky to create in *Illustrator* alone.

Then there's a demo of the excellent *FreeHand* Xtra: *3D Invigorator*. This makes creating 3D objects and logos a breeze. Finally, we have a selection of *Illustrator* plug-ins from Graphicxtras.com. These plug-ins are incredibly useful when working with symbols – enabling you to do much more with symbols than in *Illustrator* alone.

And if you've ever fancied having a go at creating your own *FreeHand* Xtra, check out the *FreeHand XDK* on the CD!





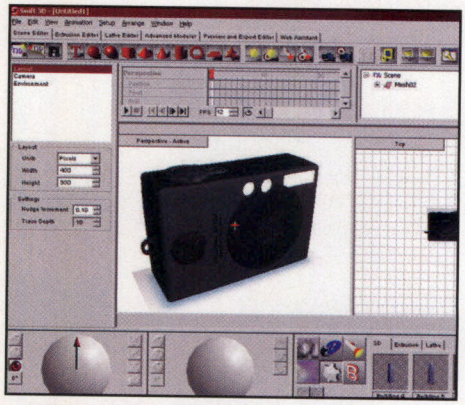
More info... www.graphicxtras.com, www.shinycore.com, www.zaxwerks.com, www.macromedia.com

Swift 3D 4

Demo the latest 3D vector illustration app...

If you want to add a 3D feel to your illustrations, but aren't ready to delve into the likes of *Maya* or *Softimage*, one solution may be Electric Rain's *Swift 3D*. For a long time, this software has been the leading vector 3D application, enabling you to generate both static and moving vector images.

New to version 4 is an improved interface, some advanced texture-mapping options, and the ability to import 3ds files with bitmap textures. If you're after an easy(ish) 3D tool, then this could be worth trying out. Check out the demo version of the app on your CD.



More info... www.erain.com

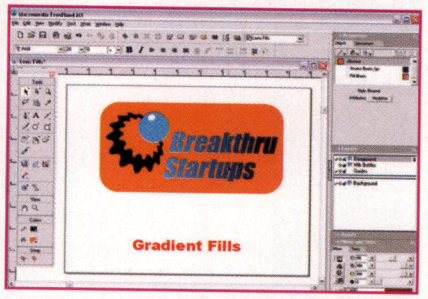
FreeHand MX training

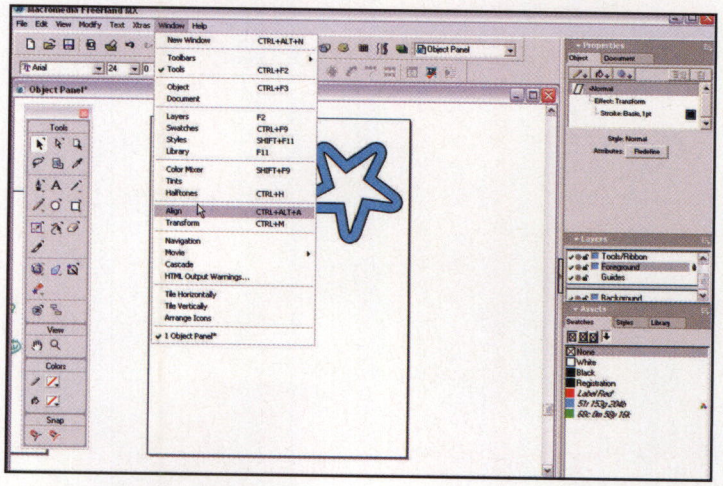
Learn the basics of Macromedia's vector app...

Learning how to master a vector graphics app by yourself can take years of experimentation. But, thanks to our video training from *FreeHand* guru Ron Rockwell, you'll get to grips with the basics of the app in no time at all.

Part of his 'Casual FreeHand MX' video training course, this chapter deals specifically with the Object panel and how to maximise its potential. The Object panel in *FreeHand MX* can be used to 'stack' effects, creating vector graphic appearances that were previously impossible (or at least extremely difficult) to create.

This expert video training is HTML-based, meaning you can run it through your web browser with no problems, although you will need Flash Player installed. Simply click on the Object panel on the main interface to start the course. You'll be up and running with *FreeHand MX*'s Object Panel in no time at all, and will soon be creating amazing vector graphics. ca-p





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On the CD...

Full contents on page 96

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- IMAGEZOO illustrations worth $2,268
- Urban CGI illustrations worth $1,485
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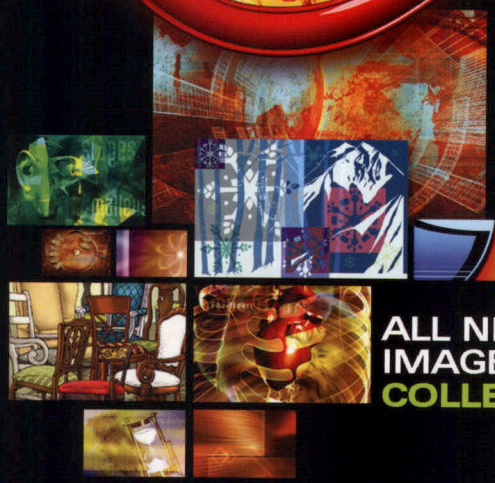

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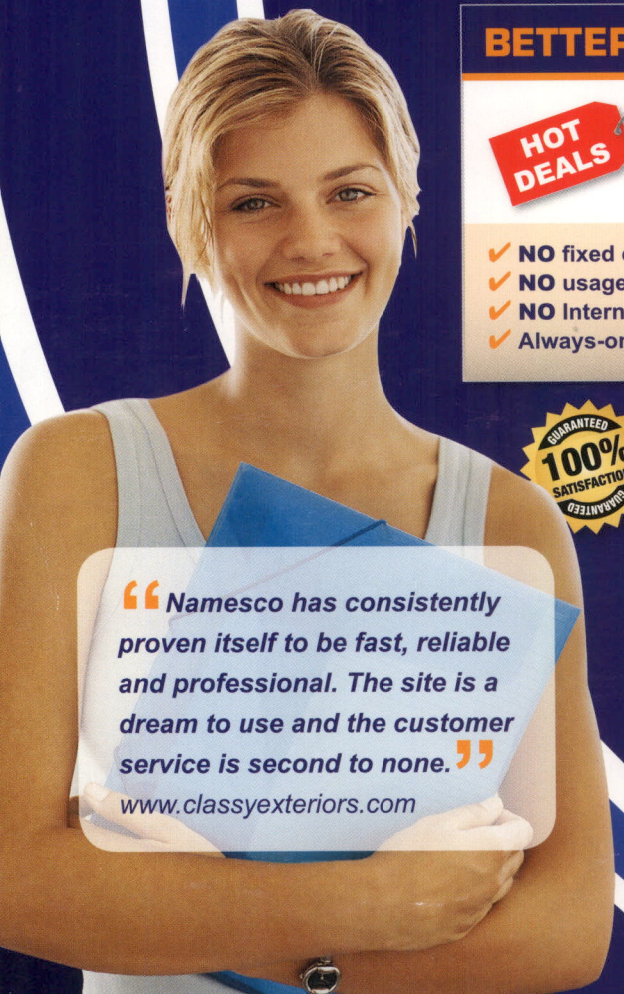
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